'When I am in Good Habitt':
Clothes in English Culture *c.* 1550 - *c.* 1670

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Sure this robe of mine does change my disposition.

William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, IV, 4, 134.

Abstract

Clothing occupies a complex and important position in relation to human experience. Not just utilitarian, it gives form to a society's ideas about the sacred and secular, about exclusion and inclusion, about age, beauty, sexuality and status. In short, clothing provides a filter through which we interpret our social world. Yet despite its centrality to the lives of historical subjects, dress had been little studied by mainstream history. This omission is especially noticeable in a period in which clothing had an overt and often acknowledged importance, was the topic of moral, religious and political debate, and the object of juridical control.

As a step towards repairing this omission, this thesis explores some of the meanings and uses of dress within early modern culture. More specifically, it focuses principally on the upper, and the top end of the middling sort *c.* 1550- *c.*1670, and traces ways garments participated in people's lives. Clothing was used to promote health and physical well-being, and both to manage, and structure, life transitions. It helped individuals create social identities, and also to disguise them. Indeed, so culturally powerful was the manipulation of appearances that authority sought its control. Laws regulated access to the dress styles of the elite, and, through less formal strategies, techniques of disguise were kept as the perquisites of the powerful.

In uncovering these experiences, this thesis argues that clothing was not just an expression of early modern culture, but in turn contributed to societal formation. Clothes shaped the configurations of the body, affected the spaces and interactions between people, and altered the perceptions of the wearers and viewers. People put on and manipulated their garments, but in turn dress exercised a reverse influence. Clothes made not just the man and the woman, but also the categories of gender itself.

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Author's Declaration

The basis of the background historiography to costume studies presented in the first section of Chapter 1, 'Histories of Dress', was researched and written in the course of an MA in Historical Research at the University of York. Much of the last section of Chapter 3, 'A Very Good Fancy in Making Good Clothes', has been published in the context of a longer article, 'To Fashion a Self: Dressing in Seventeenth-Century England', *Fashion Theory*, 3 (1999), 197-218.

Abbreviations

APC	*Acts of the Privy Council*
BIHR	Borthwick Institute of Historical Research
BL	British Library
Bod. Lib.	Bodleian Library
CA	College of Arms
CJ	*Journals of the House of Commons*
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers Domestic*
Diary	*The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by Robert Latham and William Matthews , 11 vols (London, 1970-1983).
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
LJ	*Journals of the House of Lords*
PRO	Public Record Office
SP16	Public Record Office, State Papers Domestic, Charles I
SR	*Statutes of the Realm*
YCA	York City Archives

Introduction

THE PLEASURE OF THE TEXT(ILE)

Histories of Dress

In his diary entry for 8 October 1666, Samuel Pepys recorded the beginnings of a new look. England was at war with France and London reeling from the aftermath of the Great Fire, and so the King intended to create a fashion for clothes that was both anti-French and anti-extravagance. 'It will be a vest,' wrote Pepys, but 'I know not well how'.[1] By the following week, however, Pepys had discovered more:

> This day the King begins to put on his Vest, and I did see several persons of the House of Lords, and Commons too, great courtiers, who are in it - being a long Cassocke close to the body, of black Cloth and pinked with white silk under it, and a coat over it, and the legs ruffled with black riband like a pigeon's leg - and upon the whole, I wish the King may keep it, for it is a very fine and handsome garment.

The rush on tailors for the new style must have been considerable, for within days the fashion was being flaunted and sartorial gossip was rife:

> The Court is all full of Vests; only, my Lord St. Albans not pinked, but plain black - and they say the King says the pinking upon white makes them look too much like magpyes, and therefore hath bespoke one of plain velvet.

Not to be behindhand, Pepys too plunged into the fashionable stream and ordered a matching outfit. It arrived on 4 November:

> Comes my Taylors man in the morning and brings my vest home, and coat to wear with it, and belt and silver-hilted sword. So I rose and dressed myself, and I like myself mightily in it, and so doth my wife.

However, in the afternoon Pepys was to discover some less positive aspects of his new garments, for the weather was cold and he became 'mighty fearful of an ague (my vest

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[1] For details of the introduction of the English vest, see Esmond S. De Beer, 'King Charles II's own Fashion; an Episode in Anglo-French Relations', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2 (1938-39), 105-15, and Diana de Marly, 'King Charles II's Own Fashion: The Theatrical Origins of the English Vest', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 37-38 (1974-75), 378-82.

being new and thin, and the Coate cut not to meet before upon my breast)'.[2] In time it seems that Pepys learnt how to wear this style satisfactorily - or at least learnt how to accommodate the worrying possibility of an ague - for seven months later he was re-vamping an old outfit: 'I to my tailor's about turning my old silk suit and cloak into a suit and vest'.[3]

While clothing has been pushed to the margins of historiography, Pepys's reflections remind us that, by contrast, dress was central to the lives of historical subjects. Fernand Braudel, one of the few historians to consider the area, suggests that the clothing practices of an age are a window onto its underlying *mentalité*. The way in which people dress is an 'indication of deeper phenomena - of the energies, possibilities, demands and *joie de vivre* of a given society, economy and civilisation'.[4] We have only to return to Pepys's narrative to see this complexity beneath such apparently unremarkable events. Scrutinize his experience for a moment and we find the politics of foreign relations and national identity; the significations of status as the court jostles for position; the creation of a new aesthetic as judgements decree just where that hair line is to be placed that divides beauty from magpie absurdity; the policing of gender roles as Elizabeth Pepys looks on, but does not try on; Pepys's delight in his dressed self; and the disciplining and education of his body to find pleasure in apparently unpleasant physical sensations. Thus, far from being merely an index of utility, clothing has immense symbolic importance. It gives form to a society's ideas about the sacred and secular, about exclusion and inclusion, about age, beauty, sexuality, and status. To adapt the archaeologist Christopher Tilley's formulation, clothing is a cultural practice that involves a way of thinking and provides a medium for thought.[5] So wide ranging is this cultural practice that any investigation needs, as Philippe

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[2] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by Robert Latham and William Matthews , 11 vols (London, 1970-1983), VII, 315, 8 October 1666; 324, 15 October 1666; 328, 17 October 1666; 353, 4 November 1666. Hereafter *Diary*.

[3] *Diary*, VIII, 295, 26 June 1667.

[4] Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, trans. by Siân Reynolds (London, 1981), p. 323. Two further historians to have given the subject serious consideration - and who are also, perhaps coincidentally, French - are Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1996) and Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by Richard Bienvenu (Princeton, NJ, 1994).

[5] Christopher Tilley, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (London, 1994), pp. 67-75 (p. 70).

Perrot has written, to 'venture into the terrain of gestures, anatomy, sexuality, hygiene, economics, signs, rituals, morality and the law'.[6]

Given clothing's complex and important position in relation to human experience, it is surprising how many of its studies are prefaced by justifications.[7] Frequently scholars have even felt it necessary to defend their area of interest 'from the charge of frivolity'.[8] As recently as 1999 the editors of a volume of conference papers pointed out that despite 'the sometimes marginalised position that dress is given within academia and museology', its study was valuable. Another collection of conference proceedings from the previous year stated that, 'fashion and clothing have for a long while remained scholarly unmentionables'.[9] In the face of such scholarly neglect, these authors stress clothing is a site of academic endeavour where serious study will be amply rewarded. It is somewhat ironic, however, that this chorus of justification effectively drowns out the voices of antecedent texts, and thus silences a long tradition of writing on costume. Within this tradition, the greatest number of texts are illustrated histories of dress. Detailing the chronology and physical appearance of clothing, these books are catalogues of vestimentary change. Such chronologies are also a massively popular way of experiencing history. They fill the shelves of public libraries, and adroitly negotiate the distinction between children's and adults' literature. However, while gaining a large readership, costume histories are frequently relegated to the margins of serious scholarship and dismissed as the product of an antiquarian impulse.

As a genre, illustrated costume books emerged in the 1560s, meeting a demand for information on the dress and manners of other countries. Usually including some examples of historical dress, they possibly reflected Renaissance interest in the classical past. The

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[6] Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie*, p. 3.

[7] Jennifer Harris opens her article with: 'Traditionally, the study of fashion has not been taken seriously as an academic discipline [...] anyone studying the subject has had repeatedly to justify their interest', see Jennifer Harris, 'Costume History and Fashion Theory: Never the Twain Shall Meet?', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 77 (1995), 73-79 (p.73). Kelly and Schwabe refute the 'dry-as-dust fogies' image, and instead assert that the study of costume 'has a real practical use' in verifying art works, see Francis M. Kelly and Randolph Schwabe, *A Short History of Costume and Armour 1066-1800* (London, 1931; repr. Newton Abbot, 1973), p. vi.

[8] James Laver, *Taste and Fashion: From the French Revolution until Today* (London, 1937), p. 5.

[9] Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson (eds), *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity* (Manchester, 1999), p. 2; Anne Brydon and Sandra Niessen (eds), *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body* (Oxford, 1998), p. ix.

European discovery of the New World, sparking as it did a surge of interest in the unusual and the exotic, also contributed to the popularity of this genre.[10] By the seventeenth century the collecting of curiosities - including costume prints - was enjoying a vogue. Samuel Pepys, for example, was keenly involved.[11] Roughly contemporary with Pepys was the Chester herald Randle Holme III (1627 -1700), from whose work stemmed much subsequent antiquarian interest in dress. The *Academy of Armoury* (1688) was an important forerunner to later antiquarian writing, and his unpublished manuscripts in particular were used as source material by succeeding costume historians (Fig. 1). The antiquarian John Aubrey (1626-1697) also produced 'Chronologia Vestiaria' in this period, a study of changes in fashion taken from sources ranging from church monuments to old sayings.[12] The classic histories of dress in England, however, were published by Joseph Strutt between 1773 and 1799.[13] In Strutt's work a link was forged

Figure 1: Randle Holme's MS (Harley 2014)
Source: Ribeiro, 'Antiquarian Attitudes'

[10] Margaret Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1964), pp.176-78 discusses the way in which sixteenth-century ethnological literature classified cultures by apparel. See also *Constructing Race: Differentiating Peoples in the Early Modern World*, a special edition of *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 54, no. 1 (1997), especially the article by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, 'Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization', 193-228.

[11] See Diana de Marly, 'Pepys and the Fashion for Collecting', *Costume*, 21 (1987), 34-43.

[12] See Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the World of Learning* (1975), pp. 157, 163.

[13] *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* (1773), *Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits &c of the Inhabitants of England* (1774, 1775, 1776), and *Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (1776 and 1779).

with art since Strutt, himself a history painter, was keen that his studies should aid artists in accurately portraying historical garments (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Joseph Strutt, *Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits... of the Inhabitants of England*
Source: Ribeiro, 'Antiquarian Attitudes'

The nineteenth century 'produced a veritable flood of costume books'.[14] Following Strutt, Charles Alfred Stothard wrote *The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (published in serial form 1811-1832). Stothard - trained as a history painter like Strutt - also had official antiquarian standing, being both Historical Draughtsman to, and a Fellow of, the Society of Antiquaries. Of the many other costume histories of this era, the most respected include J.R. Planché's *Cyclopedia of Costume and Dictionary of Dress* (1876, 1897), and F.W. Fairholt's *Costume in England: A History of Dress to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (1846, 1860 and 1885).[15] The genre continued into the twentieth century with

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[14] Aileen Ribeiro, Introduction to Auguste Racinet, *The Historical Encyclopedia of Costume* (London, 1988), pp. 4-7 (p. 4).

[15] These writers continued the antiquarian and artistic pedigree of clothing studies. Fairholt was a professional engraver and Planché, recalling Holme, was the Somerset herald. Both were Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, and also members of the offshoot organisation, the British Archeological Association.

texts like George Clinch's *English Costume* (1909), one in the series *The Antiquary's Books.*[16] Later examples include work by Nancy Bradfield, and the many books by Iris Brooke.[17] The format of the volumes in Brooke's tremendously popular *English Costume* series, make explicit the illustrative, as opposed to interpretive, focus. Each title page states that the costume has been 'drawn and *described* [my emphasis]' by the author. John Peacock's *The Chronicle of Western Costume* (1991) and the recent reprints of Auguste Racinet's *The Historical Encyclopedia of Costume*, further indicate the genre's unabated appeal.[18]

In the twentieth century major contributions to the field of costume history came from James Laver, and the husband and wife team, Cecil Willett and Phillis Cunnington. The research for which they are best known arose very much out of the existing art and antiquarian tradition.[19] Laver, for many years Keeper of the Department of Paintings and Engravings at the Victoria and Albert Museum, began his professional work in costume history in order to aid in the dating of art works. C.W. Cunnington, a medical doctor, had a passion for collecting that recalls the vogue of the seventeenth century. He arrived at his

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[16] George Clinch, *English Costume from Prehistoric Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1909). In Clinch - a Fellow of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries and also of the Geological Society - we see repeated again the same pattern of interests.

[17] Nancy Bradfield, *Historical Costumes of England: From the Eleventh to the Twentieth Century* (London, 1938). Iris Brooke's work includes her *English Costume* series, with volumes covering the tenth to the nineteenth centuries (some of which were produced in collaboration with James Laver). All volumes were regularly reprinted. For example, *English Costume of the Eighteenth Century* appeared in 1931, and was reprinted in 1945, 1950, 1958, and 1964.

[18] Racinet's text was first published as *Le Costume Historique* in 1888. It was republished by Constable in 1987, Studio Editions in 1988, with reprintings in 1989 and 1990, and most recently by Collins and Brown in 2000.

[19] James Laver's works include texts in the *English Costume* series produced with Iris Brooke, and *A Concise History of Costume* (London, 1969). Together the Cunningtons had a prolific output, but generally speaking their frequently reprinted *Handbook of English Costume* series represents their best known work: *Handbook of English Medieval Costume* (London, 1952); *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1954); *Handbook of English Costume in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1955); *Handbook of English Costume in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1957); *Handbook of English Costume in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1959). Influenced by developments in psychology and the social sciences, both Laver and C.W. Cunnington also wrote more theoretical texts that sought to explain the changing forms of dress, rather than simply describe them. Unfortunately these attempts now seem dated and unsatisfactory, whereas their traditional descriptive costume history remains current. See James Laver, *Taste and Fashion* cited above; James Laver, *Dress* (London, 1950); James Laver, *Modesty in Dress: An Enquiry into the Fundamentals of Fashion* (London, 1969); C.W. Cunnington, *Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1935); C.W. Cunnington, *Feminine Fig-Leaves* (London, 1938); C.W. Cunnington, *Why Women Wear Clothes* (London, 1941); C.W. Cunnington, *The Perfect Lady* (London, 1948). For an overview of Cunnington's attitudes and achievements see Jane Tozer, 'Cunnington's Interpretation of Dress', *Costume*, 20 (1986), 1-17.

interest in costume collection by way of amateur archaeology, country furniture and English ceramic and glass ware. 'I suppose', he wrote in quintessentially antiquarian terms, 'I was unconsciously seeking a field of research that would satisfy my taste for the past'.[20] Sir Roy Strong's interest in historical dress was similarly motivated. Past Director of the National Portrait Gallery, he is better known for his work on Elizabeth I's iconographic and textual representations. However, that, he writes, began as 'the result of a somewhat eccentric obsession with the Virgin Queen's wardrobe'.[21] Along with extensive discussions of clothing in his books on Renaissance portraiture, Strong's published interests in dress include transcribed wardrobe accounts and details of the apparelling of Stuart masques.[22] Most importantly, he was the inaugural Chairman of the Costume Society. Mention must also be made of Janet Arnold, who came to the study of historical clothing through art and dress design. Both her archival work and her research of surviving garments detailing cut and construction, have been highly influential.[23] Working in a consultative capacity with museums around the world, Arnold was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1981.

By and large, then, all these writers have worked from within an unbroken tradition remarkable for its consistency of approach, content *and* format. The costumed past is divided by centuries or, more often, by reigning monarchs. Within each period garments are separated into the categories of male and female. The clothing portrayed is almost exclusively that of the wealthy, though servant figures are occasionally included as a counterpoint. Finally, the pictures are of key importance. Sometimes containing photographs of art works, costume histories are most often arranged around specially

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[20] Quoted Tozer, 'Cunnington's Interpretation', p. 1.

[21] Aileen Ribeiro, *The Gallery of Fashion* (London, 2000), Forward by Roy Strong. Director of the National Portrait Gallery 1967-1973, Strong then became Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum 1974-1987.

[22] *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963); *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London, 1969); Roy Strong and Stephen Orgel, *Inigo Jones and the Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols ([n.p.], 1973); *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1977); 'Charles I's Clothes for the Years 1633 to 1635' , *Costume*, 14 (1980), 73-89; *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered 1520-1620*, contributions by V.J. Murrell (London, 1983); *The English Renaissance Miniature* (London, 1983).

[23] Among Janet Arnold's many publications are: *Patterns of Fashion: Englishwomen's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1660-1860* (London, 1964); *Patterns of Fashion: Englishwomen's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1860-1940* (London, 1967); *Patterns of Fashion: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women c. 1560-1620* (London, 1984); *A Handbook of Costume* (London, 1973); and *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds, 1988).

Figure 3 Joan Nunn, *Fashion in Costume 1200-2000*

produced line drawings, showing complete figures and isolated detail. The unchanging nature of this format can be seen by comparing the illustrations of Holme and Strutt with illustrations from Joan Nunn's *Fashion in Costume* (Fig. 3), published over two centuries later.[24]

This branch of historiography seeks, above all, to bring the past into imaginative focus. A true understanding of history needs more than a knowledge of events. One needs to be able 'to look behind the dry pages of written history',[25] to visualize the ways in which historical figures lived and, in this case, dressed:

> A knowledge of costume is in some degree inseparable from a right knowledge of history. We can scarcely read its events without in some measure picturing 'in the mind's eye' the appearance of the actors; while correct information on this point has become an acknowledged essential to the historical painter.[26]

However, those responsible for 'the dry pages of written history' - the professional historians - did not agree. There has been no place in nineteenth and twentieth century history departments for costume studies. Instead, as the profession quickly developed its emphasis on state affairs, the history of daily life became the province of antiquarian scholars and populist writers.[27] Even recent cultural historiography perpetuates the neglect

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[24] Joan Nunn, *Fashion in Costume 1200-1980*, 2nd edn (London, 2000).

[25] Clinch, *English Costume*, p. xix.

[26] F.W. Fairholt, *Costume in England* (London, 1885), p. vii, taken from the preface to the 1860 edition.

[27] The effects on popular writing of the professionalization of history have been discussed in Chapter 1 of Adrian Wilson (ed.), *Rethinking Social History* (Manchester, 1993). Peter Slee, *Learning and a Liberal Education* (Manchester, 1986) explores the ways in which the early history syllabi sought to produce statesmen - scholars prepared for government, and not antiquarian research. Mark S.R. Jenner and Bertrand O. Taithe, 'The Historiographical Body', in *Medicine in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Roger Cooter and John Pickstone

of clothing. For example, despite its centrality to corporeality, histories of the body most often overlook the small matter of adornment. Even while acknowledging the body as 'the subject of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture', the cultural work of dress is strangely ignored.[28] If the body is not actually naked, the body's clothing is usually of the hermeneutically see-through variety.[29] Indeed, studies of the Renaissance body are instead strikingly visceral, presenting a subject both discursively and physically anatomized and dismembered.[30] In light of this sidelining within the discipline of History, to gain a footing in universities, costume studies turned to Art History.

As Jennifer Harris writes, 'the academic study of fashion [...] grew up alongside or in the wake of traditional art history'.[31] This is clearly evident in the Courtauld Institute's offering of an MA in dress history as a specialist subject within its art historical remit. The aim of the course is 'to give students a specialised knowledge and systematic training in the History of Dress for the dating and identification of works of art and for subsequent

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(Amsterdam, 2000), pp. 187-200 (p. 188) also note the move by which academic history, in an effort 'to achieve intellectual respectability', turned from consideration of topics such as costume.

[28] Thomas J. Csordas, 'Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology', *Ethos*, 18 (1990), quoted in Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, 'Introduction: The Guarded Body', in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (London, 1991), p. 2. In his review article 'Body, Image, Text in Early Modern Europe', *Social History of Medicine*, 12 (1999), 143-54, Mark Jenner makes the point that histories of the body most often ignore the interactive relationship between human corporeality and material culture (p. 154).

[29] Exceptions are Jane Caplan (ed.), *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (London, 2000), and essays in Nigel Llewellyn and Lucy Gent (eds), *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660* (London, 1990), particularly Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, 'Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I', pp. 11-35; Ellen Chirelstein, 'Lady Elizabeth Pope: The Heraldic Body', pp. 36-59; Elizabeth Honig, 'In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing by Hans Eworth', pp. 60-85; Tamsyn Williams, ' "Magnetic Figures": Polemical Prints of the English Revolution', pp. 86-110. The 1998 'London Bodies' exhibition at the Museum of London also dealt with the dressed figure, including a chapter 'Tailored Bodies: Medieval and Tudor Clothing' in the exhibition catalogue *London Bodies: The Changing Shape of Londoners from Prehistoric times to the Present Day*, complied by Alex Werner (London, 1998). In the three volume *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. by Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York, 1989), Mario Perniola's 'Between Clothing and Nudity' (III, 236-65), is by and large alone in considering the impact of clothing on attitudes to the body.

[30] See Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London, 1995); Frank Whigham, 'Reading Social Conflict in the Alimentary Tract: More on the Body in Renaissance Drama', *ELH*, 55 (1998), 333-350; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, 1993); and David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (eds), *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1997).

[31] Harris, 'Costume History and Fashion Theory', p. 73.

work in museums and galleries which include a collection of period clothes'.[32] Within this museum world for which dress historians are trained, clothing is presented as decorative art and with the minimum of overt interpretation: 'In museum jargon, "interpreting dress" does not mean an exercise in semiotics or psychology. For curators, interpretation means the lucid and effective presentation of the materials of art and social history.'[33] The endeavour, then, is of a reconstructive nature. As Jane Tozer has summarized the point: as costume historians 'our main purpose is the presentation of primary source material'.[34] Thus within the intellectual tradition that has dominated costume study, dress has commonly been seen as a decorative and unproblematic historical phenomenon, explicable in terms of utility or a decontextualized aesthetic. Or to return to Pepys for a moment, costume history would provide information about the evolution, appearance and construction of his vest, and verify its pictorial representation, but it would not seek to uncover his complex reactions to the garment, or scrutinize the multiple meanings that he and his contemporaries ascribed to it.

The one area of historiography in which dress has featured, has been the history of consumption. This scholarship, in tracing patterns of ownership and use in the early modern economy, has offered enormous insights into the value of material culture to

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[32] Penelope Byrde, 'The Study of the History of Dress at the University of London, Courtauld Institute of Art', *Costume*, 8 (1974), 74-76 (p.74). While the Department of the History of Dress is not large (eight students are accepted each year), its influence in this area is difficult to overestimate. Former students are regular contributors to *Costume* and *Textile History*, and dominate the field in monographs. (Before the founding of these journals specifically oriented towards clothing studies, the periodicals most likely to publish such articles reflect both the art/museum and populist background of this area. These periodicals include *Connoisseur*, *Antique Collector*, *Country Life*, *Burlington Magazine*, *Apollo*, *V&A Museum Bulletin* and *British Museum Quarterly*.) Monographs by former Courtauld students include Diana de Marly, *Working Dress* (London,1986); Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I* (London, 1988); Karen Baclawski, *The Guide to Historic Costume* (London, 1995); Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914* (London, 1996); and the series *A Visual History of Costume*, with individual volumes by Margaret Scott, *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (1986), Jane Ashelford, *The Sixteenth Century* (1983), Valerie Cumming, *The Seventeenth Century* (1984), Aileen Ribeiro, *The Eighteenth Century* (1983), Penelope Byrde, *The Twentieth Century* (1986). Most influential is the general editor of this series, Aileen Ribeiro. A former Courtauld student, Ribeiro now heads the Department and is a member of the *Fashion Theory* editorial board. Her recent monographs include *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750 to 1820* (New Haven, 1995), and *The Gallery of Fashion* (London, 2000). Ribeiro is also general editor of the *Costume Accessories* series, with volumes by Courtauld trained professionals including Alice Mackrell, *Shawls, Stoles and Scarves* (1986). Jennifer Harris is yet another former Courtauld student already mentioned in this chapter. Clearly the Courtauld department has created, and perpetuates, a dominant approach to the history of dress.

[33] Tozer, 'Cunnington's Interpretation', pp.15-16.

[34] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

people from the past.[35] Specifically, ownership of textiles and clothing has demonstrated the gradually increasing wealth and social aspirations of humbler folk, and also illuminated the hitherto hidden economy of a secondhand trade bolstered by peddling and theft.[36] However, such studies concentrate on the economic and functional importance of dress, treating garments as commodities that are variously owned and disposed of. They are an index of social standing and personal comfort, and selling or stealing them can generate cash. They are not, however, construed as items that in turn shape and 'use' their owners, or nuanced as objects in which multiple meanings and memories reside.[37] Furthermore, the literature of clothing consumption has a marked predilection for the poorer and middling sort of the eighteenth century, and tends not to address the importance of dress for other people or other periods.

This thesis, therefore, fits into what is clearly a very large gap. Between the traditional art historical methodology of costume studies and the economic analysis of the

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[35] Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: the Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978); Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, 1982); Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington, 1988); Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990); John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993); John Brewer and Ann Bermingham (eds), *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, 1995); John Brewer and Susan Staves (eds), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London, 1995); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, 2nd edn (London,1996); Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London, 1996); Joan Thirsk, 'England's Provinces: Did they Serve or Drive London?', in *Material London, ca.1600* (Philadelphia, 2000), pp. 97-108; John Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *Past and Present*, 168 (2000), 124-69.

[36] Anne Buck, 'Clothing and Textiles in Bedfordshire Inventories, 1617-1620',*Costume*, 34 (2000), 25-38; Beverly Lemire, 'The Theft of Clothes and Popular Consumerism in Early Modern England', *Journal of Social History*, 24 (1990), 255-76; Beverly Lemire, 'Peddling Fashion: Salesmen, Pawnbrokers, Taylors, Thieves and the Second-hand Clothes Trade in England, *c.* 1700-1800', *Textile History*, 22 (1991), 67-82; Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: the Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1991); Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke, 1997); Beverly Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes', *Journal of British Studies*, 27 (1998), 1-24; Beverly Lemire, ' "In the hands of work women": English Markets, Cheap Clothing and Female Labour,1650-1800', *Costume*, 33 (1999), 23-35; Beverly Lemire, 'Second-hand Beaux and "Red-armed Belles": Conflict and the Creation of Fashions in England, *c.* 1660-1800', *Continuity and Change*, 15 (2000), 391-417; Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1984); Margaret Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England, and the Accuracy of Gregory King', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 53 (2000), 677-705; John Styles, 'Clothing the North: The Supply of Non-élite Clothing in the Eighteenth-Century North of England', *Textile History*, 25 (1994), 139-66; Lorna Weatherill, 'Consumer Behaviour, Textiles and Dress in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Textile History*, 22 (1991), 297-310.

[37] See Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000).

habits of early modern consumers lies a yawning gulf into which historiography has only rarely ventured. It is a gulf in which everything is up for grabs: whose clothing is to be studied, why it should be looked at, how it is to be viewed, and even on which period attention should be focused. However, before answering these questions, it is helpful to be familiar with scholarship that lies outside History. Insights into the study of dress offered by other disciplines can aid the retrieval of clothing practices from the past.

The Pleasure of the Text(ile)

In contrast to History which has generally ignored dress, and costume history which has eschewed interpretation, on occasions the social sciences have turned a gaze both avid and avidly theoretical upon the study of clothing. Early and influential instances include Thorstein Veblen's economic analysis, and J.C. Flügel's psychological study. Veblen, an American economist and social philosopher, taught at Stanford and the universities of Chicago and Missouri. In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, the echoes of which can be detected in many subsequent studies, he interpreted fashionable dress as an expression of pecuniary culture.[38] J.C. Flügel, a professor at University College London, was a leading British proponent of Freudian psychoanalysis and shot to public notice in 1930 with the publication of *The Psychology of Clothes*.[39] This is most usually remembered for its theory of 'shifting erogenous zones', in which the fashion cycle is characterized by the exposure of one part of the female anatomy followed by another.[40] However, Flügel's research was more wide reaching than this selective summary suggests, and its foregrounding of clothing's erotic potential also exerted a long-lasting influence. More importantly, perhaps, it opened the way for studies of the psychology of dress that continue today.[41]

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[38] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1899). Veblen's thesis was adopted by James Laver in many of his books, but was most clearly stated in *Dress*. Quentin Bell compellingly expanded on Veblen's original work, see *On Human Finery: The Classic Study of Fashion Through the Ages*, rev. edn (London, 1976). More recent articulations of the role of clothing in the expression of status include Roche, *Culture of Clothing*.

[39] J.C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes*, 3rd imp. (London, 1950). It was this book that provided Laver and Cunnington with much of their interpretive framework, and it is possible to find passages in their writing that simply paraphrase Flügel's original. Compare, for example, *Psychology of Clothes*, p. 107 with Laver's *Taste and Fashion*, pp. 252-53.

[40] An accurate summation, this term was coined by James Laver and not, in fact, used by Flügel.

[41] For example Michael Solomon (ed.), *The Psychology of Fashion* (Lexington, 1985); Susan Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing*, 2nd edn (New York, 1990).

Dress has also offered a productive area of investigation for anthropology and ethnography. While early research most commonly scrutinized the dressed, or undressed, habits of indigenous peoples encountered through colonial expansion, at the start of the twentieth century anthropologist A.L. Kroeber turned to the changing forms of women's costume in his own society.[42] By comparing the dimensions of evening dress over a seventy-five year period (1844-1919), Kroeber found an underlying regularity to fashion changes. From this he inferred a regularity of social change in general, and also concluded that such changes have a 'civilizational determinism' over and above the power that any individual may have randomly to affect the course of events. Whether focusing on the culturally familiar, or on the strange, anthropological writing on dress today continues to proliferate. Indeed, to a certain extent these approaches have merged, as scholars have turned their sociological attentions to subgroups within western society that, characterized by particular political, ethnic or sexual identities, occupy positions of exclusion.[43]

These researches in turn overlap with the interdisciplinary approach that has characterized cultural studies.[44] Appearing within the last ten years particularly, such work on apparel has been given recent impetus by the publishers Berg. Instituting both a specialist journal *Fashion Theory*, and a book series *Dress, Body, Culture*, Berg have created a busy forum for scholarly debate.[45] By and large though, the subjects favoured in

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[42] While the classic taxonomy used in the observation of the human figure appeared in the nineteenth century (see *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of Travellers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands* (London, 1874), with further editions in 1892, 1899, 1912, 1929 and 1951), such anthropological methodology could be said to date from early modern descriptions of New World peoples: see Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*. A.L. Kroeber, 'On the Principle of Order in Civilisation as Exemplified by Changes in Fashion', *American Anthropologist*, 21 (1919), 235-63.

[43] For example, Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne Bubolz Eicher (eds), *Dress, Adornment and the Social Order* (New York, 1965); Ted Polhemus and Lynn Procter, *Fashion and Anti-Fashion: An Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (London, 1978); Justine Cordwell and Ronald Schwarz (eds), *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (The Hague, 1979); Ruth Barnes and Joanne Eicher (eds), *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (Oxford, 1992); Joanne Eicher (ed.), *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time* (Oxford, 1995); Brydon and Niessen (eds), *Consuming Fashion* (Oxford, 1998); Annette Lynch, *Dress, Gender and Cultural Change: Asian-American and African-American Rites of Passage* (Oxford, 1999); Linda Welters (ed.), *Folk Dress in Europe and Anatolia: Beliefs about Procreation and Fertility* (Oxford, 1999).

[44] Influential works include Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London, 1994); and Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds), *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body* (New York, 1990).

[45] The inaugural issue of *Fashion Theory* appeared in 1997. Recent titles from the *Dress, Body, Culture* series include: Alexandra Warwick and Dani Cavallaro, *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body* (Oxford, 1998); Michaele Thurgood Haynes, *Dressing up Debutantes: Pageantry and Glitz in Texas* (Oxford, 1998); Claudine Griggs, *S/he: Changing Sex and Changing Clothes* (Oxford, 1998); Linda

this literature are contemporary in nature and their approach frequently, for the purposes of understanding experiences from the past like those of Samuel Pepys, not adequately historicized.[46]

An approach frequently encountered amongst theoretical writings on dress is that of 'clothing as language'. At its most facile this position draws a correspondence between costume and the syntactic categories of linguistics: some garments are adjectives and adverbs, some are slang, some are archaic words, and so on.[47] Clearly this is nonsense, for while dress is communicative, its meanings do not have the exactitude of a linguistic utterance. Nor would the meanings of an outfit tend to generate the high levels of interpretive agreement accorded to language. As 'The Decoded Fashion Statements of Rhonda Perlmutter III' (Fig. 4) amusingly indicates, the relation between dress and its meaning is altogether more unstable than that between speech and semantics. Whatever costume is then, it is not

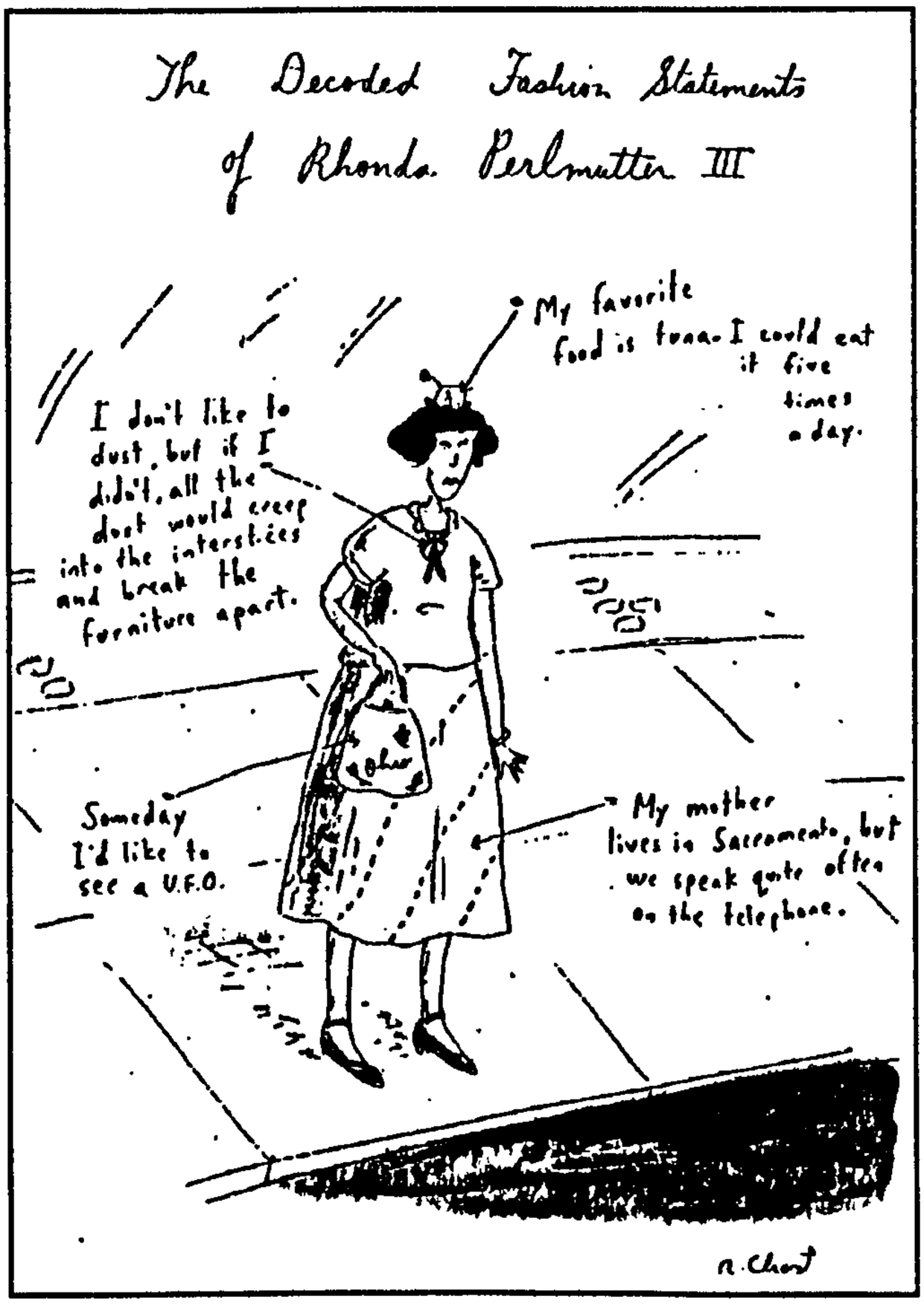

Figure 4: The Decoded Fashion Statements of Rhonda Perlmutter III
Source: Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*

Boynton Arthur, *Religion, Dress and the Body* (Oxford, 1999); Shaun Cole, *'Don We Now Our Gay Apparel': Gay Men's Dress in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2000); Alison Guy, Eileen Green and Maura Banim (eds), *Through the Wardrobe: Women's Relationships with Their Clothes* (Oxford, 2001); William Keenan (ed.), *Dressed to Impress: Looking the Part* (Oxford, 2001); Joanne Entwhistle and Elizabeth Wilson (eds), *Body Dressing* (Oxford, 2001).

[46] An exception is Christopher Breward's general survey of historical clothing, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester, 1995). *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life* (Manchester, 1999), also by Breward, is a more specifically focused text.

[47] Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, rev. edn (London, 1992).

a type of language.

More rigorous analyses, seen principally through structuralist-tinted spectacles, posit language not as a semantically identical phenomenon to dress, but as an interpretive paradigm.[48] Two basic tenets follow from this point.[49] Firstly, individual elements of a clothing system do not contain inherent meaning, but instead are relational. That is, a garment or style only has meaning in relation to other items or styles of dress. There is, for instance, no essential and unchanging quality that signifies 'practicality'. Rather a garment is only indicative of utility in contrast to others that are not, and vice versa. Furthermore, this ascription of meaning will change over time so that the same garment ten years later may, in relation to the wider clothing system, be encumbering and impractical. The same goes for any other possible meaning such as status, allure or fashion. Residing only fleetingly in a garment these signifieds can exist only by virtue of the existence of others from which they are different. The second principle of structuralist analysis follows on from the first. Given the non-necessary and relational nature of the individual elements, they can only be understood by grasping the overall system of signification, or the rules which govern what is possible and which define the structure of the system. The rules which - to use the language paradigm - make up its grammar.

Structuralist analysis has clearly provided enormous insights but also, inevitably, has its limitations. Looking at the second of these fundamental propositions, a systematic analysis will provide contextualization and a wealth of information, but it is a static model. It is just possible that a clothing 'grammar' could be written - that every garment combination could be accounted for in a system of sartorial rules. That a codpiece, for example, could not be worn with a corset, or be made of lace. However, this system could only be descriptive up to a certain point in time, or of a discrete synchronic period. It could

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[48] Petr Bogatrev has written a classic structuralist analysis of clothing in *The Functions of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia*, trans. by Richard Crum (The Hague, 1971). The sociologist Fred Davis and anthropologist Grant McCracken refute the idea of 'clothing as language', instead preferring to view clothing as a code. In doing so they following a semiotic approach, and thus rely heavily on structuralist assumptions. For the former see *Fashion, Culture and Identity* (Chicago, 1992) and 'Clothing and Fashion as Communication', in *The Psychology of Fashion*, ed. by Michael Solomon (Lexington, 1985), pp.15-27. For the latter see 'Dress Colour at the Court of Elizabeth I: An Essay in Historical Anthropology', *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 22 (1985), 515-33 and *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington, 1988), especially pp. 57-70. The sociologist Nathan Joseph in *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communicating Through Clothing* (New York, 1986) also maintains that clothing can be best understood as a system of signs.

[49] Jonathan Culler, *Barthes* (London, 1983), pp. 78-79.

never be explanatory or predictive, for anything that could be worn, carried or attached could conceivably become fashionable. An idiosyncratic style or combination of garments, moreover, would communicate just as much - or just as little - as a conventionalized, rule-conforming assemblage. Furthermore, it is difficult for such an analysis to avoid being coercive. Having positioned garments in a larger system, their meaning is established. It is then hard not to view them as imposing this unitary meaning within their society.[50] A structuralist model, then, might explain what a society's garments mean, but could not account for plurality, or contestation, or changes in this meaning. Or returning to Pepys, the language paradigm could not talk about the changing fashion status of the vest, or account for his simultaneous pleasure and fear in wearing it.

We turn now to reconsider the first structuralist principle: that of the arbitrary and relational nature of a system's individual elements. Certainly, this is partially true. The style of long vest that became fashionable in Restoration England fell from favour in 1670 when ridiculed by visiting French dignitaries. Nothing changed about the garment, except its relationship with other garments and the concept of modishness. Charles II might just as easily have devised a different style instead: a new cut of cloak or doublet, for instance. However, Pepys's account of wearing the vest alerts us to a way in which clothing *does* have inherent meaning. When, on the afternoon of 4 November Pepys went to Whitehall by river, he was cold and chilled because his vest was thin, and his coat was cut in such a way as to not cover his chest. There was something, in other words, essential to those garments that caused certain physical sensations. Wearing a cloak - although perhaps just as potent a signifier of status, or fashion, or gender - would not have had the same effect. For the material nature of clothing *matters*. Its weight, colour, fabric, cut, shape and texture are significant. The physical properties of dress are inalienable, inherent qualities, and they affect the meaning which cultures then ascribe to clothes.

The writings from the social sciences which adopt a language paradigm in their investigations of clothing owe a tremendous debt to the structuralist work of Roland Barthes. In particular they have been influenced by his study *The Fashion System.* [51] In this relatively early text, Barthes studies captions to magazine photographs, or what he calls

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[50] See for example Grant McCracken's work of historical anthropology 'Rank and Two Aspects of Dress in Elizabethan England', *Culture*, 2 (1982), 53-62.

[51] Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. by Richard Howard and Matthew Ward (New York, 1983).

'written fashion'. He then reduces this data to a set of syntactic schemes in order to formulate rules that enable one to distinguish the fashionable from the unfashionable. Ignoring actual garments Barthes's study is not concerned with the analysis of clothing, but of discourse. Despite this and its rather cumbersome, algebraic complexities, the structuralist approach of *The Fashion System* was seminal for subsequent scholarship. We have, however, seen the limitations of this theoretical position when applied to real dress. In accounting for the material properties of clothing and its many changing and conflicting meanings, I wish both to draw upon some post-structuralist developments and allude to Barthes's later work.[52] Doing so requires an interpretive shift from focus on the underlying system, to viewing 'the text as a site for the production and proliferation of meaning'.[53] Thus, instead of using a language paradigm for dress, I wish to use a textual one. To have a flexible hermeneutics we need, I maintain, to put the 'text' back into textile.

> Firstly we need to join garments and body into one:
>
> The beauty of dress, always ephemeral, is so closely connected with the living, moving body which wore it and gave it final expression, that a dress surviving, uninhabited, may appear as an elaborated piece of fabric, an accidental repository of the textile arts, but little more [...] The costumes of past generations were fashioned, not only from the materials which remain, but also by a living body, which, subject to the ideal form of the period in which it was worn, carried itself in a particular way and was often moulded and emphasized at certain points by imposed structures.[54]

Dress is performed: without underlying corporeality a garment is merely a decontextualized artefact; without garments the body is culturally muted. As Jennifer Craik has written, 'clothes are activated by the wearing of them just as bodies are actualized by the clothes they wear'.[55] If we take the clothed body as text, then, drawing on Stanley Fish's work on reader-response, we can suggest that this is 'read' by viewers who make

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[52] In particular, Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York, 1975).

[53] David Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (London, 1988), p. 211.

[54] Anne Buck, *Costume: Handbook for Curators* (London, 1958), pp. 3, 21.

[55] Craik, *The Face of Fashion*, p. 16.

their own meanings.[56] According to Fish, strategies of reading make the meaning in texts, and not vice versa. Texts are saved from a chaotic proliferation of readings by the existence of interpretive communities, or groups of readers who share the same interpretive strategies. This theory is thus able to account for the stability of textual meanings across a number of readers, and also the variety of meanings generated by a single reader, using different interpretive strategies.

Applied to clothing, this theory enables us to talk about the cultural construction of meaning with some degree of subtlety and flexibility. Looking back to Pepys, for example, it can describe the changing fashion of the vest. The garment itself did not alter, but its meaning - as read by the viewers - did. Thus, after initial indecision, it became à la mode at the court. When, in 1670 the French ridiculed the national style their interpretive strategy dominated, and at court the vest began a descent into outmoded dowdiness. In provincial England, however, this new reading took time to catch on, and the garment continued to have a fashionable popularity. In the case of Pepys, we can talk about his excitement and satisfaction, *and* how he found himself ill at ease and afraid of taking chill. In each case the vest remained the same, and yet from it the same reader/viewer generated different - and possibly opposing - meanings. Thus we can describe how individuals and groups assign certain qualities to dress, such as promiscuity, modesty, comfort, modishness; and how these are seen to change.

So, in this textual model, where does the non-arbitrary and material nature of clothing fit? What effect do those inalienable and essential properties of colour, weight, smell, and so forth, have on the interpretation of meaning? Materiality puts the limits on the physical performance of dress, but the values ascribed to that performance are relative and revisable: they are created by the interpretive viewer. For example, wearing a laced corset will always produce the sensations of enclosure, binding and tightness. At various times and by various viewers, these sensations have been interpreted as supportive, comfortable and natural. The same sensations have been equally read as restrictive, uncomfortable and deforming. Or returning to Pepys, the cold and open sensations of the vest and coat he re-learnt and reinterpreted as being appropriate and desirable.

Studies of material culture can also help enormously in our interpretation of dress, for this scholarship foregrounds what is, particularly by historians, often overlooked: that

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[56] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA, 1980).

is, objects are not inactive, but predispose toward particular modes of behaviour, and thought.[57] As Chandra Mukerji has noted, they translate ideas into material form which then remain in the environment. In doing so they also provide a setting in which only certain activities and patterns of thought will be congruent, or meaningful.[58] Objects then do not just express culture, they also create it. For clothing, what might this mean? Its forms and materiality discipline the body, ornamenting its surface, affecting size, shape, gesture, temperature, posture and movement.[59] Dress, indeed, creates a certain body and then influences behaviours and thoughts, and relationships with others. For example, a woman's garment that dictates physical isolation creates certain cultural possibilities. A society in which elite women wear farthingales is likely to hold particular views about the gendering of space, proximity and intimacy. The value ascribed to such a physical arrangement is by no means pre-determined: it is equally possible to read marginalization through exclusion, or empowerment through incorporation, or both. What is incontrovertible is that the vestimentary shaping of the body helps shape cultural context and individual personality. For owing to its fundamental relationship with the self, clothing is vital to the formation of identity. Pepys wrote when he dressed himself in his vest that 'I like myself mightily in it'. His phrase opens up the possibility that he might not like himself out of it. Or to push the point a bit further, he might be another self out of it, or dressed in another garment. For 'fashion is not so much a consequence of choice but, instead, some kind of causal agent. Clothes, in a very real sense, do "make" the man and woman.'[60]

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[57] Two studies which do recognize the importance of material culture to the workings of early modern society are Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (eds), *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge, 1996), and Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (eds), *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* (Philadelphia, 1999).

[58] Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* (New York, 1983), p.15. Other texts which helpfully discuss the importance and interpretation of material culture include: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986); Christopher Tilley (ed.), *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism* (Oxford, 1990); Arthur Asa Berger, *Reading Matter: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Material Culture* (New Brunswick, 1992); Steven Lubar and David W. Kingery (eds), *History From Things: Essays on Material Culture* (Washington, 1993); Susan Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London, 1994); and Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, rev. edn (London, 1996).

[59] Craik, *The Face of Fashion*, pp. 1-16.

[60] Berger, *Reading Matter*, p. 105. Other writers who also suggest that clothing has agency in this way include: Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie* and 'Suggestions for a Different Approach to the History of Dress', *Diogenes*, 114 (1981), 157-76; Roche, *Culture of Clothing*; René König, *The Restless*

Sources and Structure

This thesis, then, argues that clothing was an expression of early modern culture, but in turn contributed to societal formation.[61] It was fundamental to an individual's experience and creation of self, and mediated their relationships with others. As well as being commodities of utility and economic value, garments enjoyed a rich discursive life, participating in moral, religious and political debates. There were few, if any, areas of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century life in which concerns were not voiced about appearances. So much might be said, perhaps, for any moment in any society. However, in the period under study, *c.* 1550 - *c.* 1670, clothing had an extremely overt and often acknowledged importance. As Thomas Nashe and many others claimed, 'Apparraile more than any thing, bewrayeth his wearers minde'.[62] Indeed, at a time when the correspondance between the body politic and the body personal was taken with immense seriousness, matters of dress and deportment were central to social and political relations.[63] Moreover, in a period covering the Reformation and the Civil War, times of extreme religious and political unrest, we find appearance invested with a weighty moral significance. For example, the Puritan Phillip Stubbes (fl. 1581-1593) violently objected to all extremes of fashion:

> Sathan prince of darknes & Father of pride, is let loose in y^e^ land, els it [pride of apparel] could neuer so rage as it dooth [...] wherfore wo be to this age and thrise accursed be these dayes, which bring foorth such sowre frutes [new fashions], & vnhappie are that people, whom Sathan hath so bewitched, & captiued in sin.[64]

However, against such denunciations of finery, the Renaissance courts glittered with a

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Image: A Sociology of Fashion, trans. by F. Bradley (London, 1973); Craik, *Face of Fashion*.

[61] In an analogous study Mimi Hellman explores the agency of furniture and the ways it contributed to the production of elite social personae, see Mimi Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 32 (1999), 415-45.

[62] Thomas Nashe, *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (London, 1593; repr. Menston, 1970), fol. 74^r^.

[63] See D.G. Hale, *The Body Politic: A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature* (The Hague, 1971).

[64] Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, The English Experience, 489 (London, 1583; repr. Amsterdam, 1972), sigs E3^v^-[E4^r^].

hitherto unmatched conspicuous display.[65] So great was elite expenditure on dress that it frequently, or so contemporaries maintained, led directly to bankruptcy and the insolvency of landed estates.

Investigations into the early modern ownership of garments and textiles, and their type and quantity, have enabled scholars to draw conclusions about income and expenditure levels, shopping habits, attitudes to consumption and social aspiration. These studies have all concentrated on the middling and poorer sort, usually from the eighteenth century, and in the main have employed quantitative analysis of data gained from probate inventories, wills, and similar sources.[66] In contrast to such economic histories, this thesis focuses on the elite of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and asks how their apparel structured their daily experience. This is not to say that non-elite clothing was not imbued with meaning, or that it was not equally important to its wearers. However, this importance is extremely difficult to retrieve for it has left little historical record. As a cultural production of the privileged, though, apparel had a declared centrality to the realization of power, wealth, status and gender. As such, elite dress was guaranteed a cultural visibility so marked that today we can still perceive it even from our historical distance.

Clearly, though, this broad categorization of privilege and exclusion needs refining, for Tudor and Stuart society was far more complex than it suggests. Indeed, debate about social formation and questions of demographic structure and definition continue to exercise scholars of the period.[67] Such historiographical problems aside, this thesis takes

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[65] See for example Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 562-66. Stone cites the Earl of Rutland's annual expenditure on dress in the 1590s to have been in the region of £1000; while the Duke of Buckingham's, in 1627, was said to have been three times that amount (p. 565).

[66] Spufford, *The Great Reclothing*; Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel'; Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England'; Lemire, 'The Theft of Clothes'; Lemire, 'Peddling Fashion'; Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite*; Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce*; Lemire, 'In the Hands of Work Women'; Lemire, 'Second-hand Beaux and Red-armed Belles'; Weatherill, 'Consumer Behaviour, Textiles and Dress'; Styles, 'Clothing the North'; Buck, 'Clothing and Textiles in Bedfordshire Inventories'.

[67] On the formation of early modern society see Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982); Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (eds), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1994), esp. Keith Wrightson, ' "Sorts of People" in Tudor and Stuart England', pp. 28-51; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London, 1965); Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith and Keith Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford, 1986); J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History, 1550-1760* (London, 1987). For a review of the historiography of social formation, particularly around the vexed issue of the middling sort, see the recent article by H.R. French, 'The Search for the "Middle Sort of People" in England, 1600-1800', *Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), 277-93.

as its subjects those participating in courtly and aristocratic circles, the gentry, wealthy urban professionals, and those at the top end of the middling sort. In terms of the population as a whole, this is a small group. According to Peter Laslett, of all the people alive in Tudor and Stuart England at most a twentieth belonged to the gentry and above.[68] To this modest number belonged a disproportionate amount of land, money, goods – and garments. It is the stories of these garments, the stories of how they participated in the lives of their wearers, that we will trace.

Finding sources for this type of study is not without its difficulties. Despite, or perhaps because of the way apparel featured in daily life, evidence is everywhere, and nowhere. To borrow from John Kasson, it is like looking for salt in the sea.[69] Typically, commentary about clothing is dispersed widely throughout a range of records whose main subject is almost always something other than dress. Thus sources as various as, for example, court proceedings, sermons and drama are all littered with brief mentions of apparel. Very few, however, offer sustained commentary. This multiplicity of mentions has been noted by Daniel Roche. 'So the history of clothes has its sources;' he writes, 'they are abundant, though difficult to master from one single approach'.[70] Similarly, due again to the quotidian nature of dress practices which were participated in by all, there is generally a high level of assumed knowledge in contemporary writings on the subject. Since putting on garments was something that everyone did, there were many shared understandings that are now nearly opaque for the modern reader.

One of the few sources that does form both a discrete and continuing commentary is sumptuary law, that body of acts and proclamations that legislated just what any particular person could, or more precisely, could not wear. Although the first English act of apparel appeared as early as 1337, it was the sixteenth century that witnessed the most vehement and committed attempts to control how the population dressed. Repealed early in the seventeenth century, sumptuary law made an apparently uncontested exit from the statute books. However, and this is seldom noted, the next fifty years continued to see determined efforts to retrieve the control of appearances, and keep it as a matter for parliamentary prerogative.

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[68] Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost Further Explored* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 27.

[69] John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1990), p. 4.

[70] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 20.

From the declaration of state authority, we turn to less official opinions about vestimentary seemliness. One area in which we hear this voiced is the war, waged via the medium of pamphlet and treatise, on stage practices. Developing alongside the flowering of Renaissance drama, anti-theatricalism articulated anxieties about stage mimesis that contributed, ultimately, to the 1642 closure of the playhouses. Fundamental to this anxiety were concerns about dissimulation, and the dangers of counterfeiting appearances by donning forbidden raiment. In the context of all-male acting companies, this most obviously led to fervid denunciations of the cross-dressed confusion of gender.

A further debate about appearances can be found within the pages of conduct manuals, and their tangential controversy about the place and behaviour of women. There was nothing new about written guides to social behaviour. Classical commentary, biblical pronouncements and medieval definitions of courtly etiquette had all prescribed ways of acting in public. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though, this literature expanded rapidly. Developing from a small core of texts, conduct books were translated, adapted, penned and parodied. The developing notion of gentlemanly (and gentlewomanly) conduct they described was produced for an increasingly urban, educated and socially mobile population. In this context an individual's relationship to self, society, the wider world and God was emerging as more creative and contingent than in the past. New ways of acting out lives were a possibility and - as the communicating surface between the private and public - physical appearances were of the utmost importance. As John della Casa put it, in the pages of *Galateo*:

> So y^{t} there is no doubte, but who so disposeth himselfe to liue, not in solitarie and deserte places, as Heremites, but in Fellowship with men, and in populous Cities, will think it a very necessarie thing, to haue skill to put himselfe forth comely and seemely, in his fashions, gestures and maners.[71]

Alongside these textual sources I have drawn freely on pictorial evidence, particularly portraits. On a purely representational level such iconographic remains clearly have an illustrative value. Aileen Ribeiro, author of a recent study of fashions as depicted in the National Portrait Gallery collection, claims that in sixteenth-century portraits 'the

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[71] John Della Casa, *A Treatise of the Maners and Behauiours*, trans. by Robert Paterson, The English Experience, 120 (London, 1576; repr. Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 3-4.

literal truth in dress is what we do see'.[72] Certainly in these paintings the apparel and adornment of the sitters was described more meticulously than their faces. Ribeiro points out that an artist's reputation depended in great part on their ability to capture the details of lavish costumes; while for Peter Stallybrass and Ann Jones, English Renaissance portraits were 'mnemonics to commemorate a particularly extravagant suit, a dazzling new fashion in ruffs, a costly necklace or jewel'.[73] However, portraits also bear a different sort of witness to the importance of clothing in their culture. Firstly, they participated in a hierarchy of value in which textiles and dress were rated much more highly than paintings. For example, in 1572/3 Sir Henry Sidney paid only a little more than three pounds for a full-length portrait, but well over fourteen pounds for fourteen yards of velvet.[74] Secondly, they record the choices of self-presentation that each subject made for the occasion. Behind each image were decisions about dress, and the meanings that particular garments embodied.

As well as supplementing these textual and iconographic records with relevant archival material, I have underpinned the whole with the evidence of personal documents. From letters, diaries, memoirs and autobiographies, account and commonplace books we get an unparalleled glimpse of the subjective experience of clothing, and its place within the writer's life. Certainly, as with any other source there are limitations to these texts. They are unrepresentative of the general population (or even the upper echelons), and they are selective in their recordings and reminiscences.[75] However, the same could be said of most, if not all, historical records; and the information they provide about the small

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[72] Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*, p. 11.

[73] Ibid., p. 11; Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing*, p. 35.
[74] Strong, *The English Icon*, p. 50.

[75] On letters as historical evidence, see Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999); and Roger Chartier, Alain Boureau and Cécile Dauphin, *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by Christopher Woodall (Cambridge, 1997). For an introductory survey of the diary form and a discussion of its shortcomings as historical evidence, see Ralph Houlbrooke, *English Family Life, 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 1-14. For a further brief discussion see also Lucinda McCray Beier, *Sufferers and Healers: The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth-Century England* (London , 1987), pp. 4, 6, 182, 218. On the status of Pepys's diary and the relationship between the text, the man, and 'real life', see Mark S. Dawson, 'Histories and Texts: Refiguring the Diary of Samuel Pepys', *The Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), 407-31. On the development and ramifications of autobiography, see James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, NJ, 1980); Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997); and Linda R. Anderson, *Autobiography* (London, 2001).

occurrences of daily existence is unrivalled. Perhaps most importantly, personal narratives help us to sidestep our own deep-seated prejudices about appearances and come closer to a view concordant with early modern attitudes. As an example, in 1587 Philip Gawdy sent his sister-in-law fabric for a gown, and in a letter he assured her all at court were wearing such 'an open wired sleve and suche a cutt, and it is now the newest fashion'. In doing so clearly he did not feel, as have later historians, that this 'fell short of good taste', was 'objectionable', or would render her appearance 'exaggerated almost to the point of caricature'.[76]

Although favoured by economic histories of dress, one source that I have not used is that of probate inventories. Firstly, apparel is often not mentioned at all. Secondly, when it is noted values are usually given in rounded figures, or often included in a lump sum with the deceased's ready cash. Thirdly, specific garments are only rarely itemized.[77] Finally, probate inventories are much more amenable to quantitative historiography than they are to the retrieval of beliefs, feelings and attitudes. As Daniel Roche acknowledges despite using the evidence of inventories himself: 'nor does it help us to proceed from a functional reading to a symbolic interpretation'.[78]

In Chapter 1, 'Fashioning Appearances', this thesis first of all addresses some of the difficulties that we have when faced with garment styles that have long since disappeared. For if the past is a foreign country, then it certainly dresses in alien ways. Thus the opening section, 'The Wardrobe', discusses the basic forms of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century costume for both men and women, in order to familiarize the reader with this different vestimentary order. However, the following section, 'Contestations and Cloth', then problematizes this simple clothing grammar and introduces issues that lie beneath the apparently untroubled surface of costume history. Chiefly these concern disputes - both modern and early modern - about naming, and also the material absence of these garments. For while continuing in a textual and iconographic existence, very little

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[76] *Letters of Philip Gawdy*, ed. by Isaac Herbert Jeayes, The Roxburgh Club, 148 (London, 1906), p. 28; G.R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 3rd edn (London, 1991), p. 435; Virginia A. LaMar, 'English Dress in the Age of Shakespeare', in *Life and Letters in Tudor and Stuart England*, ed. by Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar (Ithaca, NY, 1962), pp. 383-426 (p. 388).

[77] For the problems associated with probate inventories as sources see Spufford, *The Great Reclothing*, pp. 125-9; and Margaret Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, ed. by John Chartres and David Hey (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 139-74, esp. pp. 149-50 and n. 21.

[78] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 18.

early modern dress survives, so to speak, in the flesh. Added also to this interpretive complexity is the need to consider the importance of cloth, both to the completed garment and to the wider culture. For textiles were economically, and symbolically significant; and men and women demonstrated an awareness and knowledge of cloth that is absent from our society. In light of these issues the last part of Chapter 1, 'Reviewing the Wardrobe', returns us to a reconsideration of early modern dress styles. It explores the prevailing aesthetic more fully, and considers how the forms and structure of garments determined a vocabulary of movement, and defined the 'work' of dress.

From this rather generalized beginning Chapter 2, 'Addressing the Body', turns to actual individuals and their experience of clothing in relation to their physical well-being. Specifically, the first section, 'Outwardly for Defence...Inwardly for Cleanliness', examines the intimate, almost organic relationship between cloth and skin, and how garments sustained, protected and purified the body. Where uncovered flesh was vulnerable to disease and cold, garments encased the wearer in defensive layers that left only face and hands exposed. Clothing also defended the wearer from internal dangers by cleansing the body of its polluting secretions. So fundamental was clothing to bodily well-being, that it is not surprising to find dress also connected with the apprehension of physical maturation and transition. Thus garments became both a way of thinking about aging, and the means of structuring rites of passage. The second section, 'Clothing Grief', looks in depth at one such moment: that of death. In doing so we principally investigate the changing forms of mourning apparel and how it functioned to help early modern society manage issues of mortality and bereavement.

Chapter 3, 'Clothes Make the Man', turns from the wearer's physical well-being to focus on ways that clothing structured his or her social body. In 'His Garments Helpe Him to bee Counted Such a One', the chapter presents evidence of individuals consciously using particular styles of dressing as a means of creating a desired identity, and also as a way of judging others. These desired identities might foreground aspects of personality, gender, political allegiance, or religious belief. Moving from the latter to a consideration of the Puritan stereotype of plain and sober apparel, we find that the 'way' of wearing was just as significant as the 'what' of wearing. In other words, not only did garment choice carry meaning for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century viewers, but also the manner in which these garments were borne, displayed and manipulated. As an example of this, the first section concludes with a look at hat honour, the social subtext governing the use and

handling of male head wear. Through focusing on clothing as it shaped social personae, the chapter goes on to show that the process was a public undertaking. The sartorial project, while begun in private, generated most meaning when viewed by others. 'To See and be Seen' explores this facet of the early modern dress experience, identifying arenas of visual engagement where people took opportunity to assess one another's appearance. It also considers portraits in costume and the wearing of livery as different means of extending the visibility of the self. While these were ways of establishing credit through public witness, discredit was formulated in a similar fashion; by openly demonstrating an inappropriate or unseemly dressed persona. Indeed, through this we see that in the early modern world sartorial misuse was a signifier of social dysfunction. Finally, 'A Very Good Fancy in Making Good Clothes', explains why the relationship between social and sartorial reputation was so very intimate and binding in the past. Before the mechanisms of mass production, consumers took a much more active part in the creation of their clothing, their choices determining the colour, cut, fabric and style of a new garment. An individual thus 'made' their clothes; in turn the public response to this vestimentary project made or unmade the self.

While Chapter 3 traces the establishment of social identities through the agency of clothing, Chapter 4, 'None Shall Wear', turns to the regulation of this process. For so important was the matter of public appearance that, via the mechanisms of sumptuary law, both Parliament and Crown sought to exercise authority over the way people dressed. This chapter is divided into three parts. Before asking what motivated the state to undertake the regulatory project, 'Dress and the Law' first surveys the statutes and proclamations that make up the body of legislation. Although these laws were repealed in 1604, it is an assertion of this chapter that the desire to control appearances continued well into the seventeenth century, and that the actual disappearance of the laws provides a misleading index of early modern thought. The reasons that made dress control so attractive a proposition to lawmakers were weighty, and covered economic, moral, and social issues. For, not far beneath the apparel acts lay fears of financial hardship, social dysfunction, crime, and immorality. The second section, 'Discipline and Display', looks in detail at whom the laws targeted. For despite a repeated rubric that castigated the lower orders, a careful reading of the acts and proclamations reveals instead a concern to control the appearances of the upper sort in general, and young men in particular. The most startling discovery is the complete omission of women from the apparel orders until 1574, followed

by a sudden inclusion which seems to have been closely connected to the politics and person of the monarch. Finally, 'Doomed to Failure?' discusses the effectiveness of the sumptuary project, confronting the common apprehension that these laws were unenforceable, and therefore foolish. It concludes that the nature and parameters of sumptuary legislation did indeed impose severe limitations on its effectiveness. However, this did not make the laws of apparel a bad idea. On the contrary, they were a reasonable response to serious concerns and had, if not practical support, then widespread theoretical approval.

One of the fears prompting the sumptuary orders was that clothing might be used to misrepresent the wearer, and deceive and mislead the viewer. Despite an apparent desire for a simple transparency of self-presentation, early modern people knew 'seeming' might not be the same as 'being'. Chapter 5, 'False Beards and Borrowed Breeches', explores this further. In the opening half, 'Them and Us', we look at the misrepresentation of identity in the context of social exclusion. By contrasting the figures of the vagabond and the courtier it becomes clear that attitudes to disguise were profoundly political, and access to this strategy was rigorously policed. For the privileged, the manipulation of appearances was a culturally sanctioned technique for advancement, or prudent self-preservation. More ordinary folk might also employ sartorial counterfeit, but they risked censure or, as some court records indicate, retribution. In the case of the marginal and socially excluded, the use of disguise was inherently suspicious, and enmeshed the perpetrator in the imputed motivations of deceit and duplicity. The punishments for those who dared to appear as other than they were, were brutal and disfiguring, permanently inscribing on their bodies the 'truth' of their marginalized identity. In the second half of the chapter, 'He or She?', we look at disguising that played with perceptions of gender. This is a subject that has drawn vociferous comment, both from modern scholars and early modern moralists. The former, conflating cross-dressing in literature, on the stage, in the pages of controversial tracts, and in real life, have looked back to early modern London and seen a city in which women strode about dressed in breeches. Looking more closely at the discursive treatment of cross-dressing, however, reveals the real target of complaint to be the extremes of elite fashion. The transgression was chiefly framed in sartorial terms and not, as it might first appear, in terms of gender. By contrast, cross-dressing that occurred in real life rather than discursive space, like any other aspect of disguise, is found to be inflected by class. That is, for those who were powerful enough, wearing another's raiment - whether they be from

a different status group or different sex - was an allowable strategy. For those without influence, it was dishonest and punishable. As occasion necessitated, then, false beards or borrowed breeches could be worn with impunity, but only by the privileged.

Thus this thesis looks at the importance of clothes in people's lives. It traces their involvement in physical processes, in bodily transitions, in the organisation of individual identity, and in the policing and misrepresentation of social appearances. In all these contexts garments were used by their wearers, and in turn asserted themselves to shape movements, create feelings, and foster attitudes. Before we move on to Chapter 1 it is as well to return to Samual Pepys, who briefly reminds us of this power and agency of dress. 'We had a very good and handsome dinner, and excellent wine,' he wrote. But, 'I not being neat in clothes, which I find a great fault in me, could not be so merry as otherwise and at all times I am and can be, when I am in good habitt'.[79]

[79] *Diary*, II, 198-9, 19 October 1661.

Chapter 1

FASHIONING APPEARANCES

Although this thesis examines the meanings and utilizations of clothing within elite early modern society, this first chapter will consider its styles and component garments. This may seem like a step in an altogether unreflective direction - a scrap of 'hemline history' - but before any scrutiny of meaning we need an appreciation of form. Without at least sharing the vocabulary of clothing with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century wearers, and to some degree being able to visualize its referent objects, our understanding of journal entries, laws, satire and pictorial records will be very partial indeed. What follows, therefore, is a broad brush introduction to the costume of the period, divided between male and female dress.

After this, however, we will delve deeper and consider both inconsistencies internal to the subject and the pressure of certain material conditions, that make the sketching of a clothing grammar a more problematic undertaking than at first it might seem to be. For even the accurate naming of garments has presented difficulties and generated disagreement amongst scholars. Nor are these modern disagreements necessarily soluble, for they are only the latest in a line of disputes that originated with contemporary wearers. While their differences of opinion may be left to us, their clothing is not. For the fragility of fabric combined with an ethic of reuse has meant that very few garments survive to clarify this already blurred field of study. Research into these material artefacts must therefore, for this historical period, be undertaken in their absence. It is an absence that adds difficulties not just to a consideration of form, but also of substance. For even before cloth was tailored into clothing, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century culture had invested it with meaning. Therefore, to look at the fashion of dress without also noting its fabric, is to disregard contemporary significance.

Having thus questioned the apparently straight-forward narrative of costume history, the chapter returns to look once more at the styles of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dress. This time we consider the possible implications of a garment's structure and shape, exploring how clothing helped form both individual bodies and cultural perceptions.

The Wardrobe - Men

The story of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century fashion can be told very simply. Our

starting point is a sketch of a clothed male figure dating from the 1570s (Fig. 5). The drawing comes from the marginalia of a York Archbishop's Register, and was presumably penned idly by some bored clerk.[1] The sketch indicates that our modern gestalt of the appearance of an Elizabethan was very close to theirs. The basic articles of male dress for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the doublet, hose and cloak. As we can see in the clerk's drawing, doublets, worn over a shirt, were sleeved garments covering the torso. They were close fitting, but also well wadded and reinforced with boning. During the latter part of the sixteenth century this stiffening and padding developed into the 'peascod belly', a style which swelled belly-like out from the stomach and even, in more extreme forms, over and below the waist line. Although always appearing to open centre front, the buttons or lacing there were not infrequently decorative, with the real hook and eye fastenings to the side. Sleeves were either sewn into the garment, or made as separate items to be attached by long laces called points. Our clerk's drawing and Figure 6 show a doublet wing which might decoratively hide such an arrangement. Jerkins were very similar garments to doublets, only sleeveless, and were worn over the top for warmth.[2] Due to their similarity of

Figure 5: Marginal drawing Cons. AB. 33 (1570-72)
Source: Reproduction by permission of the BIHR

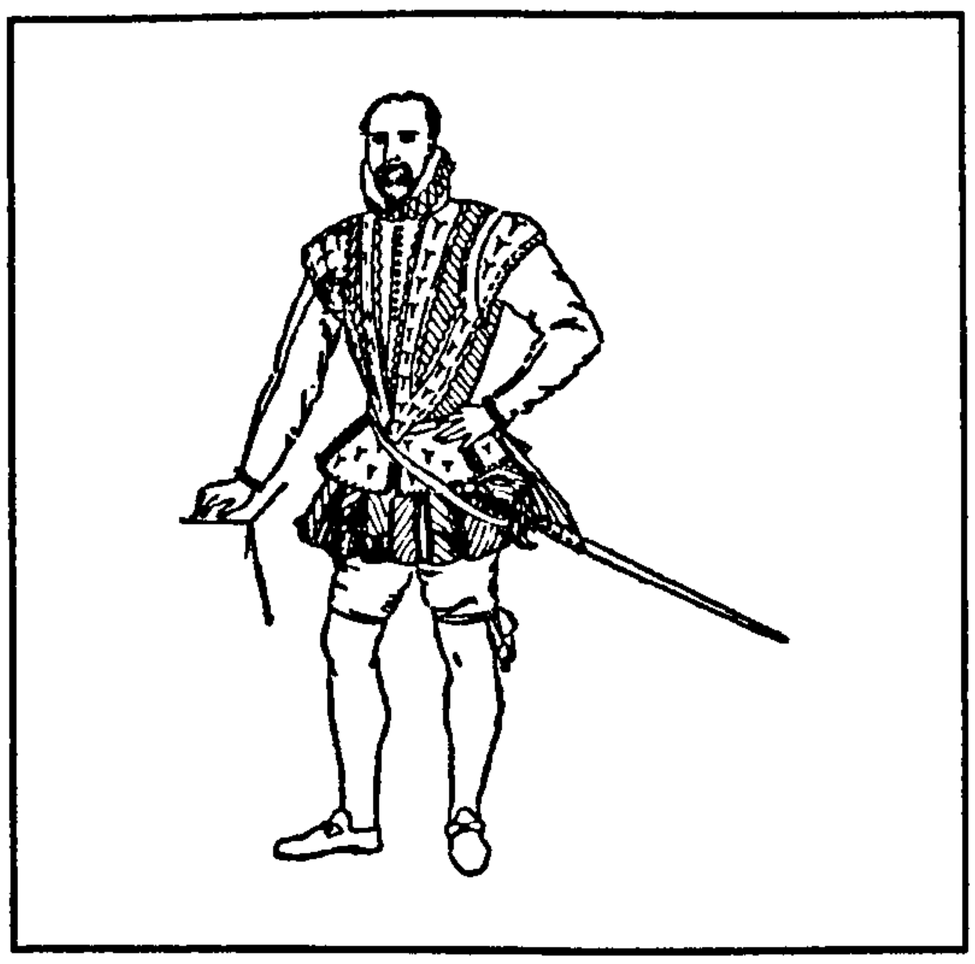

Figure 6
Source: Cruso, *Costume*

[1] BIHR, Cons. AB. 33 (1570-72). There are two almost identical sketches on fols 12^{v} and 13^{v}.

[2] See Janet Arnold, 'A Study of Three Jerkins', *Costume*, 5 (1971), 36-43. However, while Arnold states that jerkins were sleeveless jackets, both Karen Baclawski, *The Guide to Historic Costume* (London, 1995), p. 134, and Aileen Ribeiro and Valerie Cumming, *The Visual History of Costume* (London, 1989), p.

appearance, their presence in portraits is often very difficult to tell. Figure 7 shows a partially unbuttoned jerkin worn over a doublet that features a modest peascod belly.

Figure 7
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

Hose, which covered the legs, comprised two sections: upper and nether. Upper hose, synonymous with breeches, enclosed the body from the waist to somewhere between thigh and knee, depending on the style. These were various, but the 'typical' Elizabethan look - portrayed by the archdiocesan clerk - was of trunk hose. This was a short, full style that ballooned out from the waist and extended only to mid or upper thigh (Fig. 5, 6, 8 and 9). The remaining area of the visually isolated and elongated leg was covered by long stockings or by canions. The latter, possibly pictured by the clerk, were close fitting extensions to trunk hose, made often in a contrasting fabric and sewn into the gathered fullness of the onion-shaped uppers (Fig. 6 and 9). An alternative style, increasingly popular from the last quarter of the century, were Venetian breeches. Venetians were cut to be full and baggy around the hips and thighs, but tapered to narrowness about the closed knee (Fig. 7). With all styles of upper hose the lower portion of the leg was covered by a garment variously named as nether hose, nether stocks, or stockings. These were gartered either over, or underneath the breeches (Fig. 6 and 8).

Although gowns continued to be worn, particularly for warmth or sobriety, from around the mid-sixteenth century cloaks were far more fashionable (Fig. 8). While their claim to chic remained constant, the preferred styles changed: sometimes hooded, sometimes with hanging sleeves, now shorter, now long. A younger son making his place on the fringes of Elizabethan court society, Philip Gawdy (1562-1617) wrote to his brother of an attempt to introduce one of these stylistic changes. 'Vppon Wednesday last a very specyall strayte commandement from the quene gyuen by my L. chamberlayne, that no man shall come into presence, or attend vppon Her Ma^{tie} wearing any long cloke beneath the knee, or therabouts.' Although inconvenient to fashionable aspirants, Gawdy astutely

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232, maintain that they might sometimes have hanging sleeves attached.

remarked that, 'It commeth in a good hower for taylers and mercers and drapers'. For 'all men ar settled into longe clokes', and must perforce either rush to get them shortened, or pay for a new one - both options that spelled profit for the craftsmen.[3]

Figure 8
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

Figure 9
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

The item which lives in our minds as an inescapable vision of the second half of the sixteenth century is the ruff. Originating as a small frill drawn up at the neck of a shirt (Fig. 5), by the 1570s the ruff had grown in size and complexity, and had become detachable (Fig. 6, 7 and 8). Shaped into a wide variety of styles, the quintessentially Elizabethan image is of the cartwheel ruff, whose closed pleats encircled the wearer and produced the 'head on a plate' look. The alternative style of neck wear for both men and women was the band or, as we would name it, the collar. Again developing from the neck of a shirt or smock, it became a detachable item and was worn in two varieties: the falling and standing. The first of these was turned down in a way we would think of as being typically collar-like (Fig. 9). The second, as its name suggests, stood out and up around the neck (Fig. 10). Although known throughout the sixteenth century, in James I's reign both varieties of band came to dominate, and the ruff disappeared from fashion. Unlike the falling band, the standing variety also declined in use, and after the 1620s was little seen. Cuffs, ranging

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[3] *Letters of Philip Gawdy*, ed. by Isaac Herbert Jeayes, The Roxburgh Club, 148 (London, 1906), pp. 90-91. Gawdy wrote his letter from Greenwich on 29 August 1594. Interestingly, no record of such a royal command appears to survive elsewhere, certainly not in any of the proclamations concerning dress. The nearest is a proclamation enforcing statutes of apparel issued some fourteen years previously, that included an injunction against the use or wear of 'excessive long cloaks', see *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. by P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven, 1969), II, 454-62, issued Westminster, 12 February 1580, 22 Elizabeth.

from plain linen to complex lace and ruff styles, in form usually echoed the collar above (Fig. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

These basic items of male dress in fact changed very little over the seventeenth century. Breeches became longer and baggier in the Jacobean period (Fig. 10), bands gained supremacy, and the ruffs that remained were often worn not standing up, but falling unstiffened across the shoulders. This tendency to less rigidity and to looser forms continued until, broadly coinciding with the accession of Charles I, dress presented a much softer and restrained look (Fig. 11 and 12).

Figure 10
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

Furthermore, despite the extraordinary social upheavals throughout the Civil War and Interregnum, mid-century fashionable dress stayed remarkably static. The individuals wielding power may have been different, but the way they were clad was the same. Indeed, official portraits of the Interregnum rule frequently copied Van Dyck's paintings of the courtly regime, simply substituting new parliamentary heads for the old royalist ones.[4] Thus, despite the disruptions of political and social life, the visual appearance of the elite remained unbroken until the 1660s.

Figure 11
Source: Cruso, *Costume*

Figure 12
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

[4] David Piper, *The English Face* (London, 1957), p. 112. On the republican appropriation of Caroline portrait images see Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print 1645-1661* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. pp. 31-68.

Bringing not only a monarch and court to England, the Restoration brought also their French styles of dress. The old guard returned with a new flamboyance which, for men's clothes particularly, exaggerated the loose fullness of former styles to a remarkable degree (Fig. 13). The tabs or skirts of the doublet disappeared, leaving a garment so short that it no longer met the breeches below. Instead lace and linen from the shirt beneath foamed out at the wearer's midriff. The independently fastened breeches burgeoned into the 'petticoat' style rather like modern culottes.[5] The only two suits in this style that survive in England are a guide to the typical construction. Open at the knee, the breeches featured an almost unbelievable fullness, each leg measuring a phenomenal five feet two inches in circumference.[6] With so much room for a false move, it is perhaps no wonder that Mr Townend, Pepys's friend, made 'his mistake the other day to put both his legs through one of his knees of his breeches, and went so all day'.[7]

Figure 13
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

Below the breeches, and replicating their form, were canons. Decorative additions to the stocking top, they turned down over the garter in a wide frill of linen.[8] The other feature typical of men's dress in the early 1660s were the garnishing ribbons. Derived originally from the points used to truss an outfit together, these laces had survived into the seventeenth century as decoration, leaving the functional work to buttons, and hooks and eyes. Adorning the post-Restoration modes, however, they fluttered to prominence: the ribbons trimming one surviving suit have been estimated as having a total length of 141

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[5] It is unclear whether the name petticoat breeches was contemporary, or a later - possibly derisory - appellation, see Lesley Edwards, ' "Dres't Like a May-Pole": A Study of Two Suits *c.*1600-1662', *Costume*, 19 (1980), 75-93 (p. 84).

[6] Ibid., p. 84.

[7] *Diary*, II, 66, 6 April 1661. Also quoted in Edwards, 'Dres't Like a May-Pole', p. 84.

[8] C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd edn (London, 1963), p. 161.

yards, while the other suit has a glorious 216 yards adorning it.[9] This cascading ensemble was finished off with a short circular cloak.

Despite the exuberance of Restoration fashions, they were short lived. Novel in 1658, already by 1665 this look had started to wane.[10] Then in October 1666 came the death knell. Charles II's act of sartorial patronage that introduced the vest, coat and breeches ensemble, ushered in the basic forms of a mode that is still with us today (Fig. 14). Replacing the doublet, the earliest forms of the vest were much more substantial garments than the reduced modern waistcoat. Long, and of a relatively narrow fit, this garment covered the breeches, making their fullness untenable and decorative exuberance redundant. Thereafter a neatly fitting breeches style was worn, plain and tapering to the knee. Over the top the coat, cut along very similar lines but sleeved, completed the outfit. Thus ousted, cloaks declined from fashion, remaining in use only as warm and serviceable outer coverings. The three piece suit was born.[11]

Figure 14
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

The Wardrobe - Women

The basic components of the woman's wardrobe were bodice, skirt and gown. Glossed by Karen Baclawski as the portion of a woman's dress above the waist, the bodice was worn over the shift and stiffened by whalebone, wood strips, or reeds.[12] Either back

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[9] Edwards, 'Dres't Like a May-Pole', pp. 86, 90.

[10] Ibid., pp. 79, 80.

[11] David Kuchta discusses the relatively plain dress styles for men which dominated from the late seventeenth century onwards, and finds in their restraint a new political tool whereby aristocratic gentlemen and middle-class reformers contested access to power, see 'The Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing, and English Masculinity, 1688-1832', in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 54-78.

[12] Baclawski, *Guide to Historic Costume*, pp. 37-38. If the bodice was not boned, a corset of almost identical design would be worn beneath. The main difference between the two garments was decorative: the corset, not made to be seen, was plainer and more purely functional.

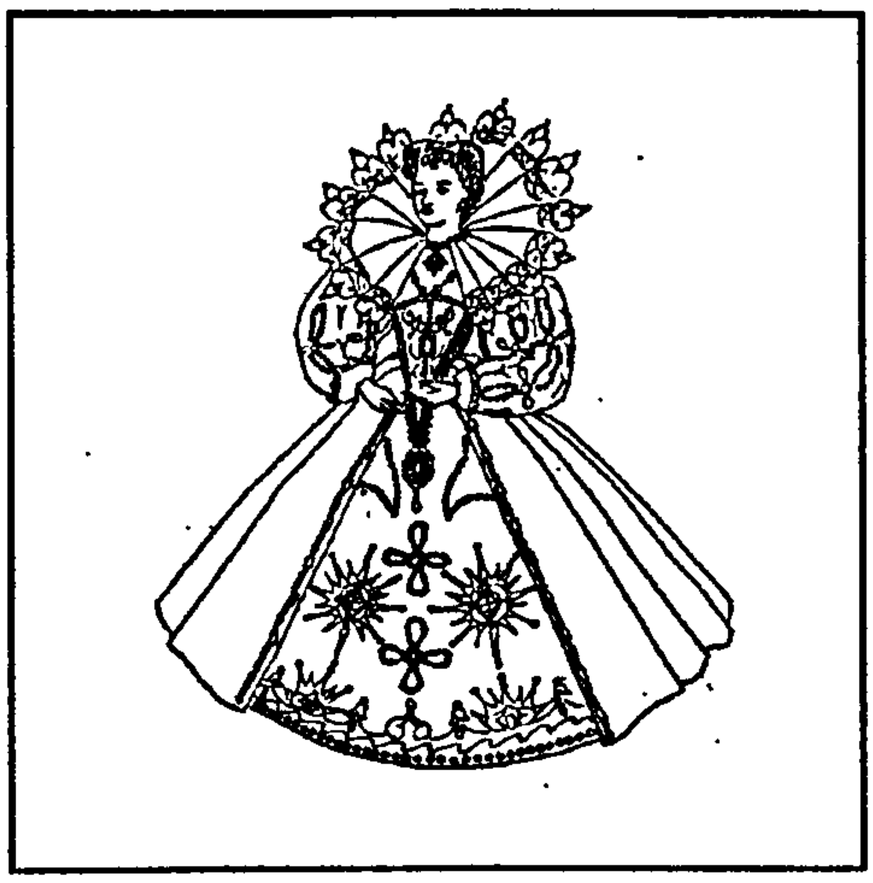

Figure 15
Source: Cruso, *Costume*

or front lacing, bodices that did fasten down the front would generally be worn with a stomacher (Fig. 15). This was a stiffened triangular insert worn point down, and fastened to the bodice at either side by points, pins or ribbon ties. Functionally, the stomacher filled in the gap between the two front edges of the bodice and continued the corseting effect. Visually, the highly decorated insert took the eye from the top down to its long bottom point, making the torso appear even longer.[13] As with men's doublets, bodice sleeves were either fixed or detachable. A number of styles emphasized certain features: some close fitting, others flaring at different points, and some sporting elaborate shoulder rolls. The most dramatic in form were trunk sleeves (Fig. 15). Like men's trunk hose they puffed out from the limbs they covered, and were so large that their fullness was supported and held in shape by an internal framework of wire, whalebone, or wood. Their dimensions might be enlarged still further by the addition of gauze oversleeves, ballooning affairs that added yet another texture to the complicated assemblage.

The striking characteristic of the sixteenth-century skirt was its farthingale shape.[14] The first form, popular for most of the second half of the century, was the conical Spanish farthingale (Fig. 15 and 16). True to its name, this fashion originated in Spain around 1470, at least 70 years before its English appearance.[15] It was known there as a 'vertugadin', the

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[13] Stomachers were occasionally worn by men to fill in the opening on doublets and gowns. See Ribeiro and Cumming (eds), *Visual History of Costume*, p. 238.

[14] I have simplified the confusion that clouds the nomenclature of women's dress by referring to the lower portion as the skirt. The term 'kirtle', for example, seems to have altered in meaning over the sixteenth century. First denoting both bodice and skirt (sewn or tied at the waist), after about 1545 it came to refer only to the lower portion of the dress, see Ribeiro and Cumming (eds), *Visual History of Costume*, p. 235; C.W. Cunnington and P. Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London, repr. 1962), p. 53; and Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I* (London, 1988), p. 12. However, Janet Arnold appears to suggest that the first meaning remained in parlance, see *Patterns of Fashion: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women c.1560-1620* (London, 1985), p. 8. Petticoat has a similarly undecided significance, variously describing skirts, underskirts, or a man's under doublet, see Ribeiro and Cumming (eds), *Visual History of Costume*, p. 237; Cunnington and Cunnington, *Handbook Sixteenth Century*, p. 26; Baclawski, *Guide to Historic Costume*, p. 161.

[15] See Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Caroline Beamish (New Haven, 1997), pp. 91-92.

anglicization of which results in its variant names (farthingale, vardingale, vardugal etc.). In the 1590s the French, or wheel, farthingale took the fashionable lead, and most portraits from this period feature the distinctive 'hula hoop' round the wearer's hips over which the overskirt falls vertically to the ground (Fig. 17 and 18). These portraits also show that the farthingale was worn tilted up at the back, and that a deep flounce often lay over the horizontal level of the skirt.

Figure 16
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

The final basic component of sixteenth-century women's dress was the gown.[16] This was a full length garment worn over bodice and skirt, with a range of possible sleeve styles: hanging, puffed, sleeveless or full. The loose version was generously cut, and from the shoulders fell freely to the ground. The close bodied or fitted gown was shaped to the waist, from where it was generally worn open to reveal the skirts beneath (Fig. 15 and 16).

Figure 17
Source: Cruso, *Costume*

Figure 18
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

As with men's costume, over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remarkably little happened to alter the basic construction of women's apparel. The farthingale declined

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[16] Gowns were also worn by men over doublet and hose. Increasingly, however, they betokened sobriety or a professional status, and the cloak took the ascendency for fashionable wear.

Figure 19
Source: Cruso, *Costume*

during James's reign as did the use of extended and enlarged sleeves (Fig. 19), and this gradually developed into the softer Caroline silhouette characterized by a full draping skirt and short bodice (Fig. 20). However, post-Restoration women's dress is simultaneously more and less complicated than the pictorial record might suggest. Taking portraits as source material would suggest that elite women appeared swathed in careless satin, with expanses of shift negligently showing at the low neckline and beneath the loosely fastened sleeves. However, these paintings actually record the contemporary vogue for posing in *déshabillé* - a state of 'undress' which outside the picture frame was only suitable for the privacy of the home.[17] As well as purely informal poses in smock and loose nightgown, other arrangements of dress helped the sitter play at pastoral or Olympian roles.[18] Because of this vogue for informal and fanciful images, portraits are problematic as evidence of late seventeenth-century fashion. Instead, 'information about it has to be sought in French fashion drawings, and contemporary engravings and illustrations'.[19] Looking at these alternative sources reveals a much simpler story, for the development of women's dress in the 1660s is consistent with earlier styles. In fact, apart from the lengthened bodice which, worn with a deeply pointed stomacher lowered and narrowed the

Figure 20
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

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[17] Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914* (London, 1996), pp. 95-99.

[18] Ashelford, *Art of Dress*, p. 99; Piper, *English Face*, pp. 130-31. Aileen Ribeiro explores in full the genre of 'fancy dress' portraits in the eighteenth century in *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750-1820* (New Haven, 1995). Nightgowns were for informal day wear and not, as the name might suggest, bed attire.

[19] Ashelford, *Art of Dress*, p. 100.

waistline, very little had altered from mid-century modes.

As with men's dress, change came at the end of the seventeenth century. The major alteration in form appeared in the 1670s with the development of the mantua, a one piece gown which replaced the separate bodice and skirt. Fitting closely at the waist, it was worn open in front and generally fastened back to reveal an underskirt beneath (Fig. 21). Although different in structure, visually the alteration in women's dress is hard to perceive. Indeed, its major ramification was in the realm of production. For being unboned (and thus worn over a corset), the mantua was sewn by sempstresses. Thus women inched their way into the production of outer wear, an industry until then the sole preserve of the male tailoring establishment.[20]

Figure 21
Source: Wilcox, *Mode in Costume*

Contestations and Cloth

These, then, were the main components of the wardrobe. For men and women alike the basic units of dress did not change until the 1660s and 70s brought about quite radically new structures. The doublet, hose and cloak ensemble was replaced by the prototypical three piece suit; and less obviously the mantua gown initiated dramatic changes in the tailoring profession, and in form looked forward to the sack dresses and side hoops of the next century. This simple story is one that is retold in innumerable texts on costume history. Fashions come and go, their duration is linked to the periodization of history by monarch, and their appearance is rendered accessible by simplified outline drawings. However, scrutinize this convenient tale for just a moment, and we find that undertaking a vestimentary history is by no means such a problem-free enterprise.

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[20] Naomi Tarrant, *The Development of Costume* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 66, 116. See also Avril Hart, 'The Mantua: its Evolution and Fashionable Significance in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity*, ed. by Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson (Manchester, 1999), pp. 93-103. On the geographical spread of the female tailoring trade in the eighteenth century, and its increasing supply of non-elite customers, see John Styles, 'Clothing the North: The Supply of Non-élite Clothing in the Eighteenth-Century North of England', *Textile History*, 25 (1994), 139-66, esp. pp. 151-56.

Firstly, there is disputation about naming. Before any discussion of the form or meaning of clothing occurs, it must be identified, and the nomenclature accepted. However, the apparently transparent activity of naming and describing garments is a problematic one. As the case of 'the baby under the bush' reveals, there were disagreements amongst contemporaries. In Hertfordshire, on a Wednesday morning in April 1688, a baby was found abandoned in the undergrowth. In the subsequent investigation and court case two women - the mother who dressed the child, and the woman who later undressed it - gave an itemized account of the baby's clothing, and these accounts differed. For example, one woman mentioned a shirt, the other a smock. One described the baby's hood as linen, the other called it calico. One said the child was dressed in a 'sweather', the other a 'wascoat', and so on. 'These two lists show the difficulty of interpreting garments from their names alone. What the two women handled were the same garments, yet even with such simple clothing as this there are variations of naming by women living only a few miles from each other.'[21]

A moment's reflection suggests that this is hardly surprising, for garment terms come and go over time, change their referent object, vary according to geography and class, and according to the age, gender and knowledge of the speaker. But however understandable, such lack of clarity remains a difficulty for subsequent researchers. Furthermore, contemporary confusion finds an echo in disagreements amongst later scholars. For 'the terminology of dress - itself open to a variety of interpretations and subject to fashion trends - remains problematic, compromising and extremely contentious'.[22] This contention can be seen in judgements made by Janet Arnold, an eminent authority in the field of dress history. Reviewing Jane Ashelford's standard text *A Visual History of Costume: The Sixteenth Century*, Arnold accused the author of errors concerning the form of garments and the nature of textiles, alleging 'a lack of understanding of basic dress construction of this period'. She warned against the presence of 'ambiguities and misconceptions in the text', and concluded that many glossary terms were 'too sketchy to be useful', or simply 'misleading'.[23]

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[21] Anne Buck, 'The Baby under the Bush', *Costume*, 11 (1977), 98-99 (p. 99).

[22] Jacqueline Herald, Review of Karen Baclawski, *The Guide to Historic Costume*, *Textile History*, 27 (1996), 238-39 (p. 238).

[23] Janet Arnold, Review of Jane Ashelford, *A Visual History of Costume: The Sixteenth Century*, *Textile History*, 15 (1984), 251-52 (p. 251).

Thus the unsettled nature of a vestimentary history starts right at the beginning with the naming and description of its objects of study. A second problem concerns the fact that by and large these objects no longer exist. No English court dress survives from the sixteenth century, and only a handful of garments are left to us from the seventeenth. A combination of material conditions and cultural usage are responsible for this dearth of tangible evidence. At the time garments, representing considerable economic investment, were created, kept, recreated in different forms, sold, bequeathed and stolen. Rather than being simply worn and discarded, apparel was adapted to different styles and uses, often by a new owner. After ending a life of wear, for example, rich garments might be transformed to ecclesiastical or domestic furnishings.[24] Adornments and trimmings of lace and ribbon were unpicked to embellish different outfits, and embroidery lifted from one background to another. Even more mundane and common items such as linen undergarments had a productive second life as rags and bandages.[25]

When this complex life cycle is coupled with the propensity of textiles to deteriorate, then the poor survival rate of early modern clothing is easily understood. In curatorial terms cloth is extremely vulnerable and fragile. 'Textiles, especially those made from natural fibres, respond to the quality of their environment more readily than many other materials and, under unfavourable conditions, deteriorate with disturbing rapidity.'[26] Included in these unfavourable conditions are dirt, damp, heat, sunlight, insect attack and even simply being handled.[27] Naturally all these threats but that of insects, are inescapable for a garment that is ever to be worn. In the absence of material evidence, then, historians of dress can only work from textual and visual sources. While these provide much information, they do so within the conventions of their own particular discourse.[28] The

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[24] Such reuse of textiles is recorded in the Earl of Dorset's wardrobe inventory for 1617, see Peter Mactaggart and Ann Mactaggart, 'The Rich Wearing Apparel of Richard, 3rd Earl of Dorset', *Costume*, 14 (1980), 41-55.

[25] On the fundamental importance to the early modern economy of recycling in general, and also specifically the reuse of textiles, see Donald Woodward, ' "Swords into Ploughshares": Recycling in Pre-Industrial England', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 38 (1985), 175-91.

[26] Jean M. Glover, 'Conservation and Storage: Textiles', in *A Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice*, ed. by John M.A. Thompson, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1992), pp. 302-39 (p. 305).

[27] Anne Buck, *Costume*, Handbook for Curators, Part D Section 3, (London, 1958), p. 9.

[28] On the difficulties of using pictorial sources as evidence, see Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 9-10. On the tropes of eighteenth-century portraiture and its relationship to costume worn outside the frame, see Aileen Ribeiro,

story they recount is different from that which is told by actual garments.

But we can push the problematic nature of this area of study still further. Even before garments were made up, their component materials were far from neutral. Rather they came with a whole range of significations. Any investigation of the role that apparel played in early modern society, therefore, must be prefaced by at least an acknowledgement of the importance of fabrics to this culture. As Peter Stallybrass has written, 'Renaissance England was a cloth society'.[29] More familiar with the scholarly perspective that looks back on such large scale phenomena as the Reformation, personal monarchy, an emergent scientific discourse or colonial expansion, Stallybrass's assertion might seem to us to be both idiosyncratic and mundane. He himself defends it by exploring the early modern cloth economy in both its fiscal and social sense. The production and circulation of textiles dominated industrial and mercantile activity. Cloth was the country's most important export, and in some cities industries for the manufacture and marketing of cloth and clothing employed up to one-half of the work force.[30] Of the twelve great London guilds that exerted such a powerful influence over the economy and government of the capital, five - the Mercers, Drapers, Merchant Taylors, Clothworkers and Haberdashers - were cloth related.[31] Noting that guilds were *livery* companies, Stallybrass also points out the importance of cloth exchange throughout early modern households, as both a means of payment and as a signal of incorporation and belonging.

However, there is a further and more fundamental way in which Stallybrass's assertion is true. Cloth in early modern England was vital to cultural formation. Structuring both the physical and mental environment, there were few experiences of significance that did not include textiles. For example, the Wardrobe in all its permutations, was a

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The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750 to 1820 (New Haven, 1995).

[29] Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn worlds: clothes and identity of the Renaissance stage', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 289-320 (p. 289).

[30] See Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London*, Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time, 7 (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 90-94. Rappaport estimates that in cities such as Northampton that did not specialize in this trade, the production and sale of textiles only accounted for one-quarter of the labour force. In London he puts the figure at one-third. In the centres of textile production like Kendal and Coventry, the numbers in the cloth trade rise to fifty per cent.

[31] See ibid. pp. 184-214.

fundamental administrative unit of government for hundreds of years.[32] The Exchequer, a medieval legacy that remains a powerful influence on our lives today, was named after the checked cloth covering the table on which accounts were tallied. Thus originally straightforward in their physical manifestations, a place for storing robes and a patterned cloth became ways of structuring government and for thinking about the exercise of power. Textiles also provided a way of picturing the numinous and, by extension, the royal. Held over or hanging behind the sacred, the Canopy or Cloth of Estate marked out the contours of authority and the presence of honour. As Hans von Vendenheym recorded seeing James I and his family in 1610, 'His Majesty was seated under a canopy of cloth of gold, together with the Queen, the Prince, the Duke of York, the Princess, Madame Arabella, and the Prince of Brunswick'. Excluded from the overarching significance of the cloth, yet partaking of nearby glory, 'a great number of earls and lords of England - all Knights of the Garter - were standing round the throne'. At a greater distance from the royal centre, 'the other parts of the room were quite filled with nobles and ladies'. [33]

These cloths and canopies constitute the source for the more informal hangings and draped fabrics popular in contemporary portraiture (Fig. 22).[34] Indeed, so insistent is the artistic use of drapery and so entrenched its position in notions of beauty, that art historian Anne Hollander has called it an 'idealisation of cloth'.[35] Nor were lengths of fabric confined to a bodily proximity. In public rituals they escaped the figure they honoured, to be draped from buildings, monuments and landmarks. The most elaborate of these ceremonies marked the progress of royalty. London citizen Henry Machyn observed the preparations for Elizabeth's processional appearance in 1561:

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[32] For a survey of this complex department see T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: The Wardrobe, The Chamber and the Small Seals*, 6 vols (Manchester, 1920-1933); *The Coronation of Richard III: The Extant Documents*, ed. by Anne F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond (Gloucester, 1983), pp. 47-73; Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 42, 50; G.E. Aylmer, *The King's Servants: The Civil Service of Charles I 1625-1642*, rev. edn (London, 1974), pp. 26-32. In 'Wardrobes in the City: Houses of Consumption, Finance and Power', in *Thirteenth Century England VII: Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1997*, ed. by Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell and Robin Frame (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 61-79, Derek Keene discusses the role and importance of this institution in the medieval great household.

[33] Hans Jacob Wurmsser von Vendenheym accompanied Lewis Frederick, Prince of Wirtemberg on his travels in 1610, and recorded the journey in diary form, see *England as Seen by Foreigners*, ed. by William Benchley Rye (London, 1865), p. 58.

[34] Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, (Berkeley, 1993), p. 23.

[35] Ibid., p. 15.

Figure 22: Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset, 1613, attr. William Larkin
Source: *Dynasties*, ed. by Hearn

The xiiij day of July was nuw graveled with sand from Charterhowse through Smyth feld, and under Nuwgate, and through sant Nycolas shambull, Chepe-syd, and Cornhyll, unto Algatt and to Whyt-chapell, and all thes plases where hangyd with cloth of arres and carpetes and with sylke, and Chepe-syd hangyd with cloth of gold and cloth of sylver and velvett of all colurs and taffatas in all plases [...] and then came the Queen's grace.[36]

It is jokingly said of the second Elizabeth that she thinks the world smells of fresh paint. As Machyn's observations indicate, to her predecessor the world seemed to be furnished in luxurious cloth.

To carry such a charge, fabric must have been anything but a humble commodity. 'As a material substance it had something of the status of wrought gold or glass, representing a triumph of man's impulse toward artificial luxury.'[37] This material indulgence - and

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[36] *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen of London, 1550-1563*, ed. by John Gough Nichols, Camden Society, 42 (London, 1847), pp. 263-64.

[37] Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, p. 15.

necessity - came in four main types: woollens, cottons, linens and silks.[38] The most splendid, costly and beautiful of these were, of course, the silken fabrics. Chief among them was cloth of gold, or silver. Technically reserved for royalty until the seventeenth century, cloth of gold was used for only the most special of occasions or people, as witnessed by the New Year's gift to Elizabeth in1584 of twenty-two yards of 'purple cloth of golde with workes', or embroidery.[39] Cloth of gold was made by weaving gold threads (finely drawn gold wrapped around a base silk thread) into the substance of a background silken cloth, although some varieties - such as tinsel or tissue - had specific names. Threads of gold, silver or copper were also worked into lace. Unsurprisingly, few of these fabrics survive, most having fallen victim to subsequent unpicking to retrieve the precious metal within. James I, alarmed at the prospect of legal tender being melted down to make plate, or decorative gold and silver leaf, even issued a proclamation insisting that such materials could come only from sources other than the realm's coinage, such as 'Silver burnt out of Lace'.[40]

Plain silks without a gold thread were numerous. Velvets, still familiar to us today, had a short pile on one side that gave the material a soft touch and rich colour effects. Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676), then Countess of Dorset, thought it special enough to record that her young daughter 'did put on her crimson velvet Coat laced with silver Lace, which was the 1st velvet Coat she ever had'.[41] Damask, originating from Damascus, like the linen cloth of today was woven into floral or geometric patterns. On 13 June 1617, Lady Clifford noted that she tried on a damask gown embroidered with gold, newly made for her by a

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[38] The subject of textiles and their manufacture in an extremely detailed and specialist area, the complexities of which I have only touched on. For what I have covered I am indebted to M. Channing Linthicum, whose text *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Oxford, 1936) is clear, informative and illustrated with literary examples. However, for considerably more detail, historical information and technical specificity, see Eric Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1985). Like most non-specialist writers on the subject of cloth, I have classified and described fabrics according to their fibre rather than their method of manufacture. As Kerridge more accurately points out, however, the names of cloth types derive from processes of construction and might be made in a variety of different fibres. Thus satin, for example, is 'generally misunderstood' as being a silk cloth rather than a type of weave that could be applied to other fibres (p. vii). For the purposes of clarity I have perpetuated the common, though less strictly accurate, understanding.

[39] J.L. Nevinson, 'New Year's Gifts to Queen Elizabeth I, 1584', *Costume*, 9 (1975), 27-31 (p. 28). Nevinson's brief article presents a transcript of the gift roll in question.

[40] *Stuart Royal Proclamations, Volume I*, ed. by James Larkin and Paul Hughes (Oxford, 1973), p. 422, 4 February 1619.

[41] *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. by D.J.H. Clifford (Stroud, 1990), p. 66.

tailor specially brought from London.[42] Satin was prized for its glossy finish, and the long soft pile of plush made it a luxurious lining material. The many references in Charles I's wardrobe accounts to plush lined cloaks, indicate that he favoured its soft texture.[43] If M.C. Linthicum was right in his supposition that taffeta, a corruption of the Persian 'taftah', is onomatopoeic, then one of the delights of this cloth was its sound in movement. Its changeable colour effects were its other attraction, manifest in Baroness Cobham's New Year's gift to Queen Elizabeth of a cloak 'lyned with strawecollored and blewe changeable Taphata'.[44] A variation, 'tuft-taffata', took this attractive characteristic still further by weaving in patterns or sections with a raised nap. When the nap was cut, the resulting pile resembled velvet, and was of a different colour to the background material. A further variation of the taffata weave was grograin. Thicker threads or cords ('gros grains') in the warp of this fabric gave the material its name, and also determined its cost. Threads of silk, for example, were more valuable than woollen varieties. Chamlet was originally a soft and fine fabric made from chamois fleece, but a silk and hair variety was more common in England. In a state of material gourmandism comparable to the passions of veal eaters, Linthicum states that the most beautiful chamlets were made from hair of kids born dead, or taken from the womb before birth. Still lighter varieties of silken fabrics included sarcenet, cypress and tiffany. The last two were both silk and linen mixes, and were so fine as to be gauze-like in appearance.

Linen fabrics were woven from flax fibres. The coarseness or fineness of the weave dictated the cost of the material and its use. For example, table linen was cheapest, shirting more expensive, and the finest most costly grades were used for neckwear. Cambric, holland and lawn are well known as the light, fine materials from which personal linen was made. Canvas, a linen weave of a much heavier quality, was commonly used for doublets, household or tabling linen, and stronger cheaper shirts. In 1639 Sir William Calley, a retired cloth merchant, wrote to his agent in London that, 'I woulde have aboute 80 elles of canvas, for servants shirtes of yarde brode, and of aboute 13^{d} thelle, and 20 elles of

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[42] Ibid., p. 57.

[43] See a transcription of accounts in Roy Strong, 'Charles I's clothes for the years 1633 to 1635', *Costume*, 14 (1980), 73-89.

[44] Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare*, p. 123. Nevinson, 'New Year's Gifts to Queen Elizabeth I', p. 28.

canvas of elle brode to make servants tableclothes of aboute 16[d] thelle'.[45]

Until the exponential growth in the availability and affordability of cottons in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these cloths were relatively scarce in England.[46] The few frequently referred to include buckram, calico and fustian. A heavy cotton or linen cloth, stiffened buckram was often used in the construction of garments as interlining. Calicoes, coming from Calicut in India, were cotton or cotton-linen mixtures made in a variety of grades, and were found right across the price, fashion and garment range. Following the establishment of the English East India Company (1599), calicoes of all qualities gradually became more widely available until their popularity, in the eighteenth century, revolutionized the clothing trade. A cotton, or cotton-linen mix, fustian had a silky appearance and was therefore often used in place of costlier velvets. Philip Gawdy was a keen observer of, in his own words, 'the newest fashion'. In 1597 he sent his brother:

> a doublet of fustian taffata, lace, sylke and Buttons fitting to the same. S[r] I pray let me not entreat yow to myslyke the coller [colour], for I do not thinke that euer ther was a better coller, or a better fustian, and such a one as I do not thinke ther is a better in England. It is not napte bycause that is saruingman lyke, and yow shall fynde that it will weare as softe, and well as velvet or sattin. I am warrented that the coller shall not chaunge. My L. Admyrall, and some others such haue had suites of the same, and tyrmmed in the same kynde. I haue hard of no saruingman had any such, and for my poor Self I haue made choyse of the lyke. [47]

Despite Gawdy's reassurances as to the quality of this material, its substitution for more expensive textiles led to the pejorative use of 'fustian' to mean full of pretense or falseness.

Unsurprisingly, given England's pastoral landscape, the largest of the textile groupings were the woollens. This broad category was immediately divisible into 'old draperies', such as serge or broadcloth, and 'new draperies'. These new fabrics, softer and finer that the old, were made of wool mixed with flax or silk, in techniques introduced by

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[45] PRO, SP16/410/46.

[46] For the dramatic story of the rise of cotton see Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1991).

[47] *Letters of Philip Gawdy*, p. 121.

Protestant weavers settling in England following the Reformation.[48] Bays (or baize) had a napped surface that made it popular as a lining material. Although expensive in the sixteenth century, by the 1630s it had lost its fashionable status. In 1640 Sir William Calley, in ordering a mourning suit, wrote that 'I desire the doublett shoulde bee lyned wth scarlett bayes'.[49] Shag was a thick-piled fabric also commonly used as a warm lining to garments. In correspondence this time from William Calley, Sir William's son, he asks their agent for 'one thing I had almost forgotten w^{ch} was as much white thread shagge as will line my doublett'.[50] Its use was not necessarily always as modest as this. The wardrobe accounts of Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset (1589-1624), describe a 'Cloake of vncutt veluett blacke laced with seaven embroadered laces of gold and black silke and above the borders powdred with slipps of sattin embroad[ered] with gold and lyned with shagg of black siluer and gold' (Fig. 22).[51] Flannel could be made in either wool or linen, and produced a fine and thin cloth. Richard Sackville's wife, Ann Clifford, in January 1617 reported wearing 'a plain Green Flannel Gown [...] & my Yellow Taffety Waistcoat'.[52]

Humbler woollens included broadcloth, kendal, kersey, linsey-woolsey and russet. Named after the two yard width of its standard weave, broadcloth was a traditional fabric ousted by the new draperies. In the seventeenth century this gradual decline in status saw broadcloth as being typically worn by servants. Kendal and kersey were both woollen cloths that probably sprang from the town of their name. Kendal was a coarse and cheaper cloth. Lighter and more expensive, kersey - like broadcloth - suffered a decline in popularity, and by the seventeenth century was relegated down the social or vestimentary hierarchy. A linen and wool mix as its name suggests, linsey-woolsey was made with a loose weave. Finally came russet. The name does not necessarily refer to the colour, for although a reddish hue was common, russet was occasionally produced in other shades, but more often simply left the undyed natural colour of the wool. This cloth was a very

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[48] For a full background see D.C. Coleman, 'An Innovation and its Diffusion: the "New Draperies" ', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 22 (1969), 417-29. Kerridge, however, both downplays the importance of foreign expertise to the domestic cloth industry, and maintains the term 'new draperies' had a fiscal importance but a negligible role in actual textile production, see *Textile Manufactures*, esp. pp. vii, 91.

[49] PRO, SP16/458/10.

[50] PRO, SP16/400/62.

[51] Mactaggart and Mactaggart, 'Rich Wearing Apparel', p. 49.

[52] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, p. 47.

traditional coarse weave, originally made domestically. Among those wealthy who would scorn to wear it, russet became synonymous with old-fashioned rustic virtues and rustic simplicity.

Textiles, then, occupied a highly visible place in early modern society. As Stallybrass has reminded us, cloth had immense economic and social importance, but it also carried significance of an aesthetic and moral nature. As the foregoing letter and journal mentions suggest, compared with us sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men and women had a heightened awareness of textiles. They observed them in ordinary and extraordinary contexts, identified them by specific variety and type, and judged them according to a range of culturally generated meanings. But however important in isolation, once shaped and tailored into garments fabrics became an even more powerful cultural resource. It is this shaping and tailoring of dress that introduces the final complexity in our 'simple' story of changing costume forms. For the structure of garments and their techniques of assemblage and wear have certain implications for both the body within, and its relationship to other bodies, and to space. It is not enough to state merely that breeches were full or bodices were corseted, for this distension and constriction meant something for the wearer, and influenced not only physical behaviours, but also such intangibles as perceptions of beauty, grace and health. Bearing this in mind we must therefore return to our simple story of elite fashion and re-scrutinize its changing forms. In doing so we will find that even the most basic dress history carries within it certain possibilities for understanding the society whose clothes it describes.

Reviewing the Wardrobe

From the mid-1500s, dress styles were characterized by extreme visual complexity. Both the male and female forms were progressively more and more unbalanced and 'distorted', with separate parts of the dressed anatomy given independent status. Rather than being subordinate to the effect of the total assemblage, each item of the late Elizabethan elite wardrobe had an independent and striking visual existence: they were 'hooks for the eye upon which the gaze catches'.[53] Coupled to this was a decorative exuberance that loaded every point with embroidery, jewels, slashes, ribboning and pattern. Indeed, Christopher Breward has described three dimensional fashionable costume as 'a

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[53] Dani Cavallaro and Alexandra Warwick, *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and Body* (Oxford, 1998), p. 83.

canvas or panel' for the flat decoration on its surface.[54] In addition to this love of variety, Geoffrey Squire sees the exaggerated independent forms of garments such as ruffs, doublets and farthingales as practising 'techniques of disintegration'. With variety, distortion, and disintegration of the whole, late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dress was, Squire has persuasively written, typically mannerist.[55]

For example, the stiffened and padded doublet broke away from the body beneath, and swelled into the peascod belly (Fig. 23). This was satirized by the impassioned Philip Stubbes, who concluded that:

> for certaine I am there was neuer any kinde of apparell euer inuented, that could more disproportion the body of a man then these Dublets with great bellies hanging down beneath their Pudenda, (as I haue said) & stuffed with foure, fiue or six pound of Bombast at the least.[56]

Figure 23: Unknown Man, 1588, Nicholas Hilliard
Source: Riberio and Cumming, *Visual History*

Squire, interpreting this Renaissance style as a caricature of the middle-aged figure, also notes that it was, and remains, a unique fashion. 'At no other time has a distended belly been artificially suggested rather than corrected or disguised.' Furthermore, this portly mature torso was frequently set over the equally stereotyped long slim legs of youth (Fig. 23).[57] These chic legs, vital to the image of a courtier, suggested 'an aristocratic elegance suitable for dancing, fencing, or riding', those most courtly of

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[54] Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester, 1995), p. 67.

[55] Geoffrey Squire, *Dress, Art and Society* (New York, 1984), pp. 45-69.

[56] Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, The English Experience, 489 (London, 1583; repr. Amsterdam, 1972), sig. E2^{v}.

[57] Squire, *Dress, Art and Society*, p. 55.

pursuits.[58] Also close-fitting, and well wadded like the rest of the doublet, sleeves were cut and sewn with a pre-shaped bend at the elbow which accommodated the inward movement of the arm without straining the seams. On the other hand, straightening the arm would have been moving against the garment's cut, and the longer outer side of the sleeve would inevitably have tightened and puckered. Thus, when not in movement, elegance and ease would enforce a stance with slightly bent arms. Such considerations add a further dimension to our understanding of the 'Renaissance elbow', that ubiquitous arms akimbo stance that set the type for male assertiveness through the Tudor and earlier Stuart years (Fig. 24).[59] Whatever the origins of this form of bodily display, as with all dressed movements it worked with, not against, the material conditions of the clothing, intellectual and physical circumstance together combining to produce a behavioural result.[60]

In order to bear out their fullness trunk hose, like doublets, were padded and stuffed to glorious proportions (Fig. 24). This was done either with multiple linings, or the addition of wool, hair and other suitable materials. Such width and weight about the hips clearly had its effect on stance and gait. Primarily it helped achieve the gallants' swagger, but secondly it also bore out the arms, thus further emphasizing the bent and elegant elbow. However, sartorial

Figure 24: Archduke Rudolf, 1567, Alonso Sanchez Coello
Source: *Dynasties*, ed. by Hearn

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[58] Ellen Chirelstein, 'Emblem and Reckless Presence: The Drury Portrait at Yale', in *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1650*, ed. by Lucy Gent (New Haven, 1995), pp. 287-312 (p. 295).

[59] See Joaneath Spicer, 'The Renaissance Elbow', in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. by Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 84-128.

[60] For a discussion of the ways clothing effects movement see Ruth M. Green, *The Wearing of Costume: The Changing Techniques of Wearing Costume and How to Move in Them from Roman Britain to the Second World War* (London, 1966); and on the eighteenth century in particular, see Alicia M. Annas, 'The Elegant Art of Movement', in *An Elegant Art: Fashion and Fantasy in the Eighteenth Century* (Los Angeles and New York, 1983), pp. 35-58. In 'Mode and Movement', *Costume*, 34 (2000), 123-28, Jackie Marshall-Ward - Director of the historical dance group, Danse Royale - discusses the effects of Renaissance costume on the body when performing contemporary dances.

pride might occasion a corresponding fall. John Bulwer, who in the mid-seventeenth century made a direct comparison between trunk hose and women's farthingales, also related the tale of a gentleman whose garment was stuffed with bran. A small rent was torn in his hose 'with a naile of the chaire he sat upon', so that as he gallantly entertained the ladies the bran poured forth 'like meale that commeth from the Mill'. This caused much laughter amongst the company. The gent, ascribing the mirth to his social success, was encouraged to yet more energetic efforts - 'untill he espied the heape of branne, which came out of his hose', and took a shameful and hasty departure.[61]

In the absence of belts or suspenders, all upper hose styles were held up by being attached to the doublet. This was done by lacing through holes in the breeches' waistband to corresponding eyelets at the waist of the doublet. Sometimes visible - a decorative virtue out of functional necessity - more often this line of points was hidden by tabbed doublet skirts. In the seventeenth century metal hooks and eyes took over fastening these two garments, but visible points were often retained as vestigial, but flamboyant, accessories. Providing the hose were full enough to allow for stretching and sitting, this system of fastening had the advantage of ensuring that the weight of heavy and generously tailored fabrics was carried from the shoulders, rather than dragging from the waist. However, the many eyelet holes in surviving garments suggest that lacing must have been a lengthy operation, and trussing or hooking at the back required either extreme dexterity, or more likely help in dressing. Such sartorial conditions explain Fynes Moryson's interested observation that, 'the Italians clothe very little children with doublets and breeches, but their breeches are open behind, with the shirt hanging out, that they may ease themselves without helpe'.[62] It also contextualizes the precepts in conduct literature that condemn public trussing or incomplete lacing.[63] For such behaviour or appearance could only suggest that the wearer had been occupied with bodily functions.

Of the many garments that we find it difficult to deal with from a modern

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[61] J. B., *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transfrom'd: Or, the Artificall Changling* (London, 1653), pp. 541-42.

[62] Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 4 vols (Glasgow, 1907), IV, 219-20. See also G.R. Quaife, *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1979), where the author quotes from a court case concerning homosexual assault. During the deposition a yeoman's son explained that he had gone into a field 'with the purpose to untruss his points for the easing of nature' (p. 175).

[63] John Della Casa, *A Treatise of the Maners and Behauiours*, The English Experience, 120 (London, 1576; repr. Amsterdam, 1969), p. 5.

perspective, one of the most obdurate is the codpiece. Originally a triangular flap in the hose, the codpiece improved fit and, by lacing separately, performed the equivalent function of the modern fly. As with so many other aspects of sixteenth-century dress, however, the codpiece underwent an exaggeration of form that resulted in some startling items of wear (Fig. 24).[64] The development of Venetians though, and of later styles of breeches thereafter, made it redundant. The longer, looser garments were made with a fly opening, and the codpiece was no longer needed to join trunk hose at the fork. It would be disingenuous to deny that the codpiece had sexual significance. Rabelais, in describing Gargantua's enormous and exuberant codpiece - 'like to that horn of abundance, it was still gallant, succulent, droppy, sappy, pithy, lively, always flourishing, always fructifying, full of juice, full of flower, full of fruit, and all manner of delight' - makes abundantly clear its symmetry with the member it encased. Indeed, 'as it was both long and large, so was it well furnished and victualled within, nothing like unto the hypocritical codpieces of some fond wooers, and wench-courters, which are stuffed only with wind, to the great prejudice of the female sex'.[65] 'Wench-courting' was also on Wat Raleigh's mind. Ben Jonson, who accompanied Sir Walter's son on a tour of France, complained of this 'knavishly inclined' youth who set 'the favour of damsels on a codpiece' - a flamboyant seventeenth-century equivalent to notches on a belt.[66] And Montaigne, too, engagingly called it a 'laughter-moving, and maids looke-drawing peece'.[67] However, it would be as misleading to overplay the sexual symbolism of the codpiece, as to underplay it. Firstly, there are remarkably few textual or iconographic mentions that make overt any significance of this kind; and secondly, its exaggerated form is shared by most other garments in the contemporary wardrobe. We choose to dwell on the enhanced shape of the genitals, but almost miss men's over-long legs and outsized bellies.

Having no apparent practical function, the ruff is another garment which clearly

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[64] Grace Q. Vicary, 'Visual Art as Social Data: The Renaissance Codpiece', *Cultural Anthropology*, 4 (1989), 3-25 suggests that the later enlarged type of codpiece developed as a functional and symbolic response to the contemporary syphilis epidemic.

[65] *The Works of Rabelais*, trans. by Sir Thomas Urquhart, intro. by J. Lewis May, 2 vols (London, 1933), Book 1, Chapter 8, pp. 29-30.

[66] Quoted in *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne*, ed. by Louis B. Wright (Ithaca, 1962), p. xxii.

[67] *Montaigne's Essays: John Florio's Translation*, ed. by J.I M. Stewart, 2 vols (London, 1931), II, 254.

demonstrates the distance between modern and early modern dress sensibility. However, because of its portrayal in graphic and sculptural media, this icon of Tudor culture has acquired a permanence which quite belies its ephemeral nature as a garment (Fig. 25 and 26). For rather than having an enduring form, the ruff was re-made at every wash. Cleaned, and then dipped in starch, the pleats of the ruff were then shaped into 'sets' with heated metal irons called poking sticks.[68] These sets were further arranged and held in place by pinning. 'By varying the sets into which the ruff is ironed and the arrangement of the pins, a different configuration can be given to the ruff each time it is laundered.'[69] While only a very few Elizabethan ruffs survive, the complexity, creativity and time-consuming nature of their construction has been revealed by the Globe Theatre's recreation of contemporary costume. A typical one of their ruffs was made from a strip of linen ten metres long, which was then handsewn, in hundreds of pleats, into a neckband just fifty centimetres in length. The starching, ironing and pinning of this basic linen form can then take up to five hours at every laundering.[70] Vulnerable to wind and rain, the fragile nature of the enterprise was ridiculed, like so much else, by Stubbes. 'But if Aeolus with his blasts, or Neptune with his stormes, chaunce to hit vppon the crasie bark of their brused ruffes, then they goe flip flap in the winde like rags flying abroad, and lye vpon their shoulders like the dishcloute of a slut.'[71] The closed and pleated ruffs were accompanied by many other elaborate and

Figure 25: Sir Francis Drake, *c.*1585, Unknown artist
Source: Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*

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[68] Starch was introduced into England from the Netherlands in 1564. This technological development enabled ruffs to grow in size and complexity, see Ashelford, *Art of Dress*, p. 33; and Nancy Bradfield, *Historical Costumes of England 1066-1968*, rev. edn (London, 1970), p. 78. Interestingly, Richard Mabey, *Flora Britannica* (London, 1996) states that an alternative form of starch, particularly for ruffs, was found in the crushed roots of the wildflower Arum maculatum, or Lords-and-ladies. However, its use often caused 'severe blistering of the launderers' hands' (p. 386).

[69] Jenny Tiramani (Associate Designer, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre), Information panel for 'Patterns of Fashion' exhibition, Victoria & Albert Museum, Gallery 40, 1 February 1999 - 22 August 1999.

[70] Tiramani, 'Patterns of Fashion' exhibition. For more on the complexities of constructing ruffs, and the Globe's re-created costumes in general, see Jenny Tiramani, 'Janet Arnold and the Globe Wardrobe: Handmade Clothes of Shakespeare's Actors', *Costume*, 34 (2000), 118-22.

[71] Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, [sig. D7^{v}].

dramatic styles: open, fan-shaped, cutwork and so on. Like the standing band, the tilt and angle of the larger varieties was achieved by pinning them to a wire frame underneath, called an underpropper or supportasse - another skilled and time-consuming technique of construction. Although structural, these frames, attached to the collars of doublet or bodice, were made decorative by cording them with silk or metallic threads. For the hundred or so years in which it held fashionable sway, the ruff was a truly privileged form of dress. The time and labour involved in its techniques of making and re-making could only be afforded by the wealthy, as too could its techniques of wear. For the restriction of movement and vision, and the enforced 'proud' carriage of head and wrists surrounded by such sartorial delicacies, argues the possession of leisure, or at very least a dissociation from manual occupation.[72] What for some may have been read as excessive or inconsequent, was a serious statement of luxury, wealth and style.[73]

For women the analogous item to the doublet was the bodice. Frequently called 'a pair of bodies', this garment had no darts to allow for either fullness at the breast or tapering at the waist. All shaping was achieved by curving the seams; and the bust, although pushed up, was also flattened.[74] This effect was increased by the busk, a removable bone or wood insert slipped into a casing sewn at the front, which further pressed against the breasts and stomach. Thus although boned, these garments produced a very different effect from the nineteenth-century tight lacing corsets with which we are familiar. The nineteenth-century varieties were much more complicated in their construction, and were already shaped into the hourglass form which then moulded the wearer. Added to this dramatic pre-shaping, the new metal eyelets enabled a much tighter lacing than had been achievable with the weaker, more flexible sewn holes.[75] Sixteenth-century bodices shaped their wearer into a longer lined and flatter torso, rather like an

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[72] This argument linking restrictive clothing to economic conditions was first developed by Thorstein Veblen in *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899). He maintained that, along with the phenomenon of conspicuous wealth, such conspicuous leisure was a condition of fashionable dress. While flawed, this argument still has much to commend it. More recent re-articulations of this theory can be found set out in Quentin Bell, *On Human Finery: The Classic Study of Fashion Through the Ages*, rev. edn (London, 1976), pp. 32-39; or interspersed through the various books by James Laver.

[73] James Laver also makes this point in *A Concise History of Costume* (London, 1969), pp. 90-91.

[74] Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*, p. 8.

[75] However, in *Patterns of Fashion* (p. 46, Figure 328; pp. 112-3, no. 46) Arnold includes detailed photographs and drawings of a sixteenth-century German bodice in which the lace holes are reinforced inside and out with metal rings.

inverted triangle. They supported the body within, too, but without exerting the level of constriction the differently shaped nineteenth-century technology made possible. In addition to a design in which the central busk was removable for comfort, it is important to remember that since the lacing controls the tightness of fit, this was also under the wearer's control. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say under the wearer's direction, since many bodices were back lacing and might require someone else to fasten them.

Figure 26: A Lady, probably Mrs Clement Edmondes, *c.*1605-10, British School
Source: *Dynasties*, ed. by Hearn

This corseted body form is echoed in the idealization of an exaggerated torso so evident in portraiture from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Fig. 26). Whether covered in cloth or painted as exposed by the low cut bodices of the 1610s and 20s, the early modern painterly vision elongated and enlarged this area, while still rendering it flat and without obvious signs of breasts.[76] This iconography argues the presence of a societal perception which registered a flat, lengthy torso as a womanly attribute. Whether the focus of desire or disapprobation (as was the case with many moral commentators whose stock-in-trade included outrage at breasts 'lying open'), this shaping of the female form dominated the cultural aesthetic. It is a

[76] As Ellen Chirelstein has pointed out in 'Lady Elizabeth Pope: The Heraldic Body', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London, 1990), pp. 36-59, there are 'no known full-scale portraits from this period that depict truly rounded breasts and nipples' (p. 58). The only contexts in which such an imaging seems to have been acceptable are the bold - in every sense - illustrations to popular literature, and depictions of masque costume. The most famous of the latter are the designs by Inigo Jones, of which a number show women in topless costumes. As strict representations these drawings need to be treated with caution, for they presumably bear the same idealized relationship to the actual worn costume as do designers' drawings today. This caution is supported by the few full-length portraits that exist depicting court women in fanciful, but unexceptional, masque dress (for example, 'Lady in Masque Costume as a Power of Juno', John de Critz, 1606; 'Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford as a Power of Juno', attr. John de Crtiz, 1606). However, the exception to this is a miniature by Isaac Oliver ('Portrait of an Unknown Woman as Flora', *c.* 1610). The unknown subject wears a masque dress cut beneath the bosom which, through transparent gauzy linen, clearly shows her breasts and nipples. Chirelstein suggests that in both 'the idealised and privileged context of the masque', and in the private, intimate world of the miniature, 'nudity' was more allowable than in portraits proper ('Lady Elizabeth Pope', pp. 56-59). While this may have been the case, the evidence of a few stylized drawings and one miniature is too slight to draw all but tentative conclusions.

vision of female beauty clearly distinct from the centuries preceding and following; being altogether different from the high circular breasts of medieval art, or the generous curves of eighteenth-century beauty.[77] As the disproportionately long legs in certain images of male courtiers bespoke a necessary attribute of manly elegance, so the anatomically improbable but culturally desirable long bosom was the female equivalent.

The earliest mention of a farthingale in England is in the Royal Wardrobe Accounts of 1545, when one was ordered for Elizabeth.[78] It is possible, therefore, that the farthingale's introduction into this country may have been due to the then princess. Although no sixteenth-century farthingales survive from anywhere in the world, scholars have used tailors' patterns and paintings to re-create their construction. The earlier conical Spanish variety was made by an underskirt with hoops of willow, whale bone or rushes sewn into material casings, which provided a frame for the overskirt in a very similar way to the Victorian crinoline. The hula hoop look of the later French style was achieved in two ways. Either an underframe was used, as with the Spanish variety, or a less pronounced look could be had by tying a 'bum roll' - like an oversize stuffed sausage - around the hips. The flounce of this farthingale was achieved by pinning the very long lengths of the overskirt so that it disguised the ridge caused by the frame beneath. Rather like the different forms that could be created by techniques of setting and pinning a ruff, so too the flounce responded to ingenuity of styling. Variations of pleats, ruffles, gathers and tucks - although perpetuated in portraits and effigies - were transient creations lasting only while the dress was worn. 'The arrangement of the skirt worn over a French farthingale was left to the wearer and her servant, who folded and pinned the flounce to suit the size of the padded rolls or frame as required.'[79]

De rigueur in the final years of Elizabeth's reign - in 1593 Philip Gawdy sent his sister-in-law 'a fuardingall of the best fashion' - the style doggedly outlasted her.[80] This must have been at least partly due to Anne of Denmark who preferred its formal (and by now increasingly old-fashioned lines) for court wear. However, by 1617 it had sunk into an irrevocable decline in England, a fashion slump witnessed by Lady Clifford who in

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[77] For the depiction of breasts in art, see Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, pp. 186-207.

[78] Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth*, p. 12.

[79] Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*, p. 12.

[80] *Letters of Philip Gawdy*, p. 77.

November of that year wrote, 'All the time I was at Court I wore my Green Damask Gown embroidered without a Farthingale'.[81] A few months before, in June, Sir Dudley Carleton (1573-1632) had written from his ambassadorial posting at The Hague. The letter, addressed to his good friend John Chamberlain, mentioned the arrival of a mutual acquaintance. It seems 'My lady Bennet' did not stay long by reason of:

> the boys and wenches, who much wondered at her huge vardugals and fine gowns, and saluted her at every turn of a street with their usual caresses of whore, whore, and she was the more exposed to view because when she would go closely in a covered wagon about the town she could not because there was no possible means to hide half her vardugal.[82]

While clearly out of fashion in Holland, and declining in England, the farthingale yet continued in Spanish-influenced areas. By 1662 the arrival of Catherine of Braganza and her entourage prompted Pepys into writing that the 'portugall Ladys [...] are not handsome, and their farthingales a strange dress'. John Evelyn was more emphatic: their farthingales were 'monstrous'.[83]

It takes only a moment's reflection to realize that the spatial effects of this dramatic style must have been considerable. The wearer of the French farthingale in particular has an architectural quality, and obtrudes into social space with insistent dimensions. It is tempting to link this spatial dominance to the social dominance of the fashion's elite wearers. This was most clearly the case with the farthingale's most visible champion, Elizabeth. Emanating from the monarch, female court dress of the last decade of the reign - like royal iconography - was extreme: wheeled skirts, trunk sleeves distended with padding and wire, hanging sleeves, standing ruffs, and wired rails that framed the head in a halo of gauze and jewellery. This relationship of political and sartorial power is clearly envisaged in the Ditchley Portrait: Eliza massive and encircling, standing over the realm (Fig. 27).[84]

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[81] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, p. 64.

[82] *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain 1603-1624: Jacobean Letters*, ed. by Maurice Lee, Jr. (New Brunswick, 1972), p. 237.

[83] *Diary*, III, 92, 25 May 1662; *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by E.S. de Beer, 6 vols (Oxford, 1955), III, 320, 30 May 1662.

[84] Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey make a similar point in 'Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London, 1990), pp. 11-35.

Figure 27: Elizabeth I, 'The Ditchley Portrait', *c.*1592, Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger
Source: *Dynasties*, ed. by Hearn

After Elizabeth's death, the farthingale began its slow decline. The female silhouette shrank; narrower sleeves were worn, and the more modestly proportioned bum roll supported the skirts. Although continuing as court wear, the connotations of the farthingale had changed. No longer read only as splendid and elegant (or even as proud and immoral), contemporaries began to view it as formal, old-fashioned, and even faintly ridiculous. So, well before the farthingale finally disappeared in England, perceptions had begun to change. John Chamberlain's opinions are illustrative. In February 1613 this witty observer of Jacobean life wrote a long letter to Dudley Carleton's wife, Alice, describing the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Frederick, the Elector Palatine. At the close he remembered:

> One thing I had almost forgotten for hast that all this time there was a course taken and so notified that no Lady or gentlewoman shold be admitted to any of these sights with a verdingale, which was to gaine the more roome, and I hope may serve to make them quite left of in time.[85]

Thus the reception of this fashion had moved from it being viewed as an indispensable part of the elite female form, to an inconvenient, perhaps backward-looking, waste of space.

Extremity, then, characterized fashionable clothing of this period. From the middle of the sixteenth century garments progressively swelled and ballooned in size, until by the

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[85] *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), I, 426.

1620s they had reached the limits of their form. Held out by an internal framework or weighted by hidden padding, these garments suggested an angular stance which highlighted component parts of the dress, and the body. Heads were isolated by ruffs or held erect by collars; the torso was held upright in its encasing doublet or bodice; arms angled out or rested on the farthingale hoops; and hips were distended by hose or skirts. While male legs and the manly gait was highlighted by the wearing of stockings, women's perambulations were hidden entirely beneath the gliding farthingale.[86] Not only anatomically exaggerated, these styles also embodied contradiction. The paunch of the peascod belly operated in counterpoint to slender young legs, the swollen hips of men's hose presented a typically female silhouette, and the plunging but flat-chested women's bodice shaped an androgynous torso. Despite the apparent fixity of an assemblage, many of the effects were ephemeral, as ruffs, lace, skirts and sleeves might change their appearance at the next wearing. But while the effects themselves were short lived, their preparation was lengthy and complicated. With extensive lacing, pinning and buttoning, dressing was a time-consuming process requiring, for its most dramatic and complex forms, not only the wealth to afford them, but also the leisure to wear them. Thomas Tomkis's complaint that 'a ship is sooner rigged by far, than a gentlewoman made ready' is much quoted.[87] His exasperated description of a task taking over five hours is obviously exaggerated satire, and also conveniently omits to mention that the techniques of assemblage were identical for men. It does, however, indicate that an activity our society endeavours to make increasingly rapid and simple was approached with an altogether different set of values four hundred years ago.

The extremity of dress form was matched by the extremity of its surface appearance. With a decorative abandon the dressed figure was layered in different textures and loaded with lace, jewels, chains and accessories. Garments were embroidered, slashed, pinked, puffed and paned. The few garments that remain to us are in a hugely faded and tarnished state, but portraits indicate the resplendence that was once theirs. These pictures were painted in full day and show the richness of colour and textures. Quite another effect must have obtained by candlelight glinting on jewellery and metallic thread. That the wearers

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[86] Squire makes this last point, suggesting the farthingale provided a motionless counterpart to active masculinity, see *Dress, Art and Society*, p. 65.

[87] Thomas Tomkis, *Lingua or the Combat of the Tongues* (1607), quoted in Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*, p. 39.

were alive to their clothing's night-time possibilities is indicated by Francis Bacon's advice on the costuming of masques. 'The *Colours*, that shew best by Candlelight,' he wrote, 'are; White, Carnation, and a Kinde of Sea-Water-Greene; and *Oes*, or *Spangs*, as they are of no great Cost, so they are of most Glory.' However, he warned, 'As for *Rich Embroidery*, it is lost, and not Discerned'.[88]

While Bacon was writing of the appearance of the dressed figure on a stage, the implicit notion of performance is equally applicable to the clothing worn in the theatre of everyday life. For the courtier *sprezzatura* - that nonchalant and effortless grace - was the ideal bodily comportment, and in the public spaces of the newly urban early modern world it was practised through the tortuous medium of contemporary dress. While apparently contradictory, it is the difficulties of fashion that add to the grace of its successful performance.[89] Indeed, perhaps such an effortless ideal could only flourish among the extremity of such effortful sartorial forms. As Geoffrey Squire has written in summation:

> Such clothes were not merely ambiguous, epicene, beautifully ugly and strangely beautiful; they provided the wearer with yet another possibility. The overcoming of difficulty was point of honour for these stylists [...] To move well and to look right in the accumulated difficulty of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dress must have required all that exhibitionism of a gymnast, who appears to make no undue effort [...] Such clothes were excessively difficult to 'get up' and keep in good order, as well as being difficult to put on and adjust. Although the basic form was firmly built into them, much of their effectiveness depended on ephemeral arrangements, dextrously made with pins or laces, during the process of dressing. All these things required great energy, firm discipline, highly skilled assistance and fine performance.[90]

But it was a performance destined to end. Inevitably, as with all fashions, such styles reached the limits of their possibility, and with nowhere else to go with the old aesthetic

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[88] Francis Bacon, 'Of Masques and Triumphs', in *The Essays*, ed. by John Pitcher (Harmondsworth, 1985), p. 176.

[89] Hellman makes a similar point, describing how the complexity of eighteenth-century furniture made graceful physical performance difficult, yet by the same token also enabled it to happen, see Mimi Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 32 (1999), 415-45 (pp. 422-32).

[90] Squire, *Dress, Art and Society*, p. 66.

a new look began to emerge.

Beginning around the reign of Charles I, dress came to be characterized by a new decorative restraint; instead of featuring variety and contrast, a dressed outfit was completed by matching colours and fabrics. Individual details no longer obtruded onto the eye, and parts of an ensemble were pressed into sartorial service for the good of the whole. Less strange to our eyes and contoured more to what we choose to delineate as the body's 'natural' shape, mid-seventeenth-century fashions at first sight slip through interpretation. Their relative familiarity does not provoke questioning, and commentators simply have less to say about less startling clothes. Apart from a temporary flutter into petticoat breeches, this comparative restraint was to last until the eighteenth century saw women burgeoning into enormous side hoops and panniers. However, although less remarkable at first sight, certain features of this vestimentary order do rise to the notice.

For both men and women the dressed waistline moved to higher up the body, and thus presented a new paradigm of desirability. But while this shortened torso contributed to an appearance of being less encased, the basic construction of the garments remained

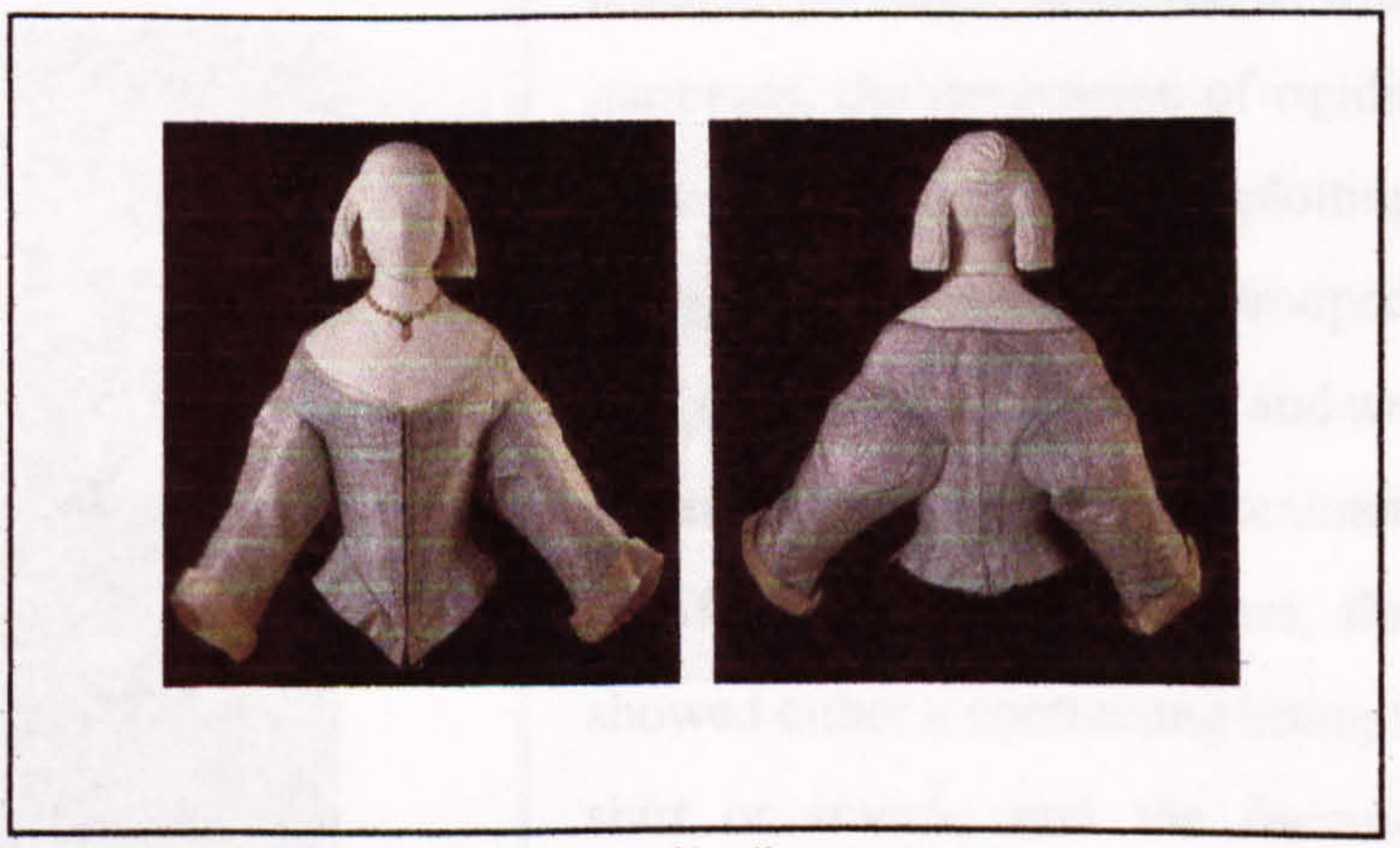

Figure 28: Front and back view of bodice, 1645-55
Source: Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*

unaltered. Thus while renouncing former padding and distension in sleeves or stomach, the doublet and bodice both retained internal rigidity: the doublet with the stiffened neck and belly piece - two triangular inserts placed either side of the front opening; the bodice with the boning and busk. Being short-waisted and square-necked the bodice gave its wearer a broader, thicker appearance. Matching this look the sleeves, too, were puffy and short. Set

well down on the shoulders and cut to three-quarter length, they limited vertical movement of the upper limbs and, for the first time, revealed a woman's forearm (Fig. 28).[91] Participating in an anatomy of intimacy for hundreds of years, the seventeenth century disclosed this body part to public view. Beneath the waistline 'puffy fluid bulk' was manifested in the voluminous folds of the skirt worn over hip pads.[92] Female beauty, in these styles, was realized as a kind of soft massivity (Fig. 29). Less evident in men's dress the high waisted doublets yet enabled the doublet skirts to lengthen, and hanging over full breeches the male outline thus echoed, albeit in a minor key, the broad bottom-heavy look of the women (Fig. 30). At the margins of dress linen and lace maintained a constant presence, however, as with the tailored garments, the impression of rigidity had gone. Instead, 'unstarched and exploiting the natural weight of linen thread, they drooped and draped, flapping about the shoulders and wrists and over the top of boots'.[93] The dominant decorative motif were long bold slashes, through which showed either a contrasting lining fabric, or the shirt or smock; and the favoured material, particularly for women's dress, was satin. Its folds and shine made it an ideal textile for draping full fashions, and the typical Caroline portrait emphasizes the play of light sliding on

Figure 29: Queen Henrietta Maria, *c.*1635, Unknown artist
Source: Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*

Figure 30: John Belasyse, Baron Belasyse, 1636, Gilbert Jackson
Source: Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*

[91] Green, *The Wearing of Costume*, p. 5.

[92] Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, p. 106.

[93] Squire, *Dress, Art and Society*, p. 78.

its surface. In a stock pose the subject furthers this effect by lightly grasping the abundant and satiny billows (Fig. 29).[94]

So, our simple story of costume forms as illustrated by a doodle at the margins of a 1570s ecclesiastical register, is a convenient one. But along with its convenience, it obscures certain complexities and contradictions that lie below such a straightforward narrative. For a start, there was a contemporary confusion about the names and forms of garments; a confusion which today finds echo in scholarly disagreement and dispute. Secondly, such disputes can not be resolved by study of the material objects in question, for due to the passage of time and the pressure of reuse, only a tiny number of garments remain. Instead research can only turn to secondary comments, whose textual and iconographic conventions make them far from transparent sources. Once having accepted these conditions imposed on our knowledge of early modern apparel, we still have to pay heed to its constituent fabrics. For even before cut and sewn into garments, textiles carried an importance that is easily overlooked from a modern perspective, in which fabric has shrunk in cultural significance. Having said all this, however, another look at the clerk's drawing reveals a slippage in which the complexity underlying the contours of dressed bodies shows through. In his casual depiction of the jaunty Renaissance elbow, the artist unconsciously leaves us an image of a body and mentality shaped by apparel. For clothing forms helped structure both the wearer's physical behaviours, and his or her ideas. It affected stance, movement and the relationship to space; and also dramatically influenced the criteria that signified such concepts as vigour, manliness, femininity and beauty.

However, so far we have considered only notional people from the past - the 'typical' Elizabethan in trunk hose or the 'average' Caroline lady in satin. It is now time to turn to actual individuals, and the experiences they recorded of the relationship between their clothing and their physical bodies. In doing so we will find that apparel impacted heavily on their sensations of health and physical well-being. It was also involved in a complex interpretation of the body, in which the boundaries between flesh and fabric merged. Finally, dress was used in both highly personal, and culturally generated ways, to help

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[94] Unsurprisingly, given Van Dyck's enormous influence in England, there was a comparable interest in the depiction of fashion fabrics in mid-seventeenth-century Dutch painting. Linda Stone-Ferrier writes that the genre demonstrated an 'infatuation with the description of the woman in the satin dress', see *Images of Textiles: The Weave of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Society*, (Ann Arbor, 1985), p. 176.

individuals create, mark and manage moments of transition in the body's journey from the cradle to the grave.

Chapter Two

ADDRESSING THE BODY

Outwardly for Defence ... Inwardly for Cleanliness

Later generations tend to look back in sartorial judgement, and impute to early modern dress a negative range of values. It was surely restrictive, unhygienic, uncomfortable, unhealthy and impractical. It must have got in the way. To wear it would have needed endurance, and those who did are pitied, and wondered at. Such sentiments are found expressed in much historiographical comment. For example, G.R. Elton wrote of Tudor dress that 'the huge hooped skirts rendered movement difficult, while the tight bodices and deep stomachers squeezed vital organs in a way not exceeded by the worst Victorian tight-lacing'.[1] Similarly, a Museum of London exhibition catalogue states that: 'this extreme fashion was uncomfortable', and also that Tudor finery was 'highly impractical'.[2] A National Portrait Gallery exhibition guide says much the same thing: 'Elizabethan dress was impressive but impractical'. The text also judges certain garments to have been unhealthy, for with 'no special clothes for pregnancy, these corsets could [...] increase the risk of miscarriage'.[3] But reading the accounts left by contemporaries reveals a very different interpretation of how it felt to wear such garments. They felt their encasing dress enhanced their physical well-being and protected against ill health and misfortune. Indeed, as Anne Hollander contends, comfort in clothing is not a physical condition, but a mental one. It does not arise from particular sensations of the body, but from having a particular self-image.[4] The self-image will be a satisfying one - productive of a sense of well-being - if it conforms to the prevailing belief system. The index of well-being in dress

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[1] G.R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 3rd edn (London, 1991), p. 435. Subjective judgements aside, the comparison with Victorian tight-lacing is simply wrong, for the structure and technology of Victorian corsets made possible a closer fit than at any time in the past.

[2] Kay Staniland, 'Tailored Bodies: Medieval and Tudor Clothing' in *London Bodies: The Changing Shape of Londoners from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, compiled by Alex Werner (London, 1998), pp. 72-81 (pp. 75, 80).

[3] *The Pursuit of Beauty: Five Centuries of Body Adornment in Britain*, text by Clare Gittings (London, 1997) [n.p.].

[4] Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 315, 339. Another scholar to challenge the idea that comfort is a self-evident and transhistorical concept, is John E. Crowley. In 'The Sensibility of Comfort', *American Historical Review*, 104 (1999), 749-82, he explores the eighteenth-century development of the language of physical well-being, and places it in the context of the contemporary political economy and developing patterns of consumption.

is not the extent to which an early modern assemblage conforms to our perceptions of health and comfort, but how far it matched contemporary perceptions.

The present, however, frequently finds it difficult to take the past seriously when clothed. It seems that something fundamental to our sense of what it is to be a proper man or woman must be being infringed, for dressed figures from the past can seem less intelligent, attractive, or even less natural. For one historian, wearing the court dress of her later portraits Queen Elizabeth 'resembles a stuffed doll'. Men, she continued, 'looked equally artificial'.[5] Again, Elton found Tudor breeches to have been 'enormous (and very unsightly)'. He went on to describe dandies wearing 'idiotically tall hats and high heels', and wrote that they 'infested' Elizabeth's court.[6] In reading these judgements, one might almost say that viewed from the perspective of our particular sartorial assumptions, the humanity of historical actors is lessened. This attitude towards dress exists in contrast to the positive response generated by many other cultural productions. In particular, music, architecture, literature and art are commonly admired and respected, often above our contemporary efforts. In these fields the endeavour and humanity of the past seems magnified. In the area of dress, as we have seen, it can appear diminished. To account for this anomaly it can only be that our body image has changed dramatically. Furthermore, this body image must be deeply implicated in what we feel it means to be a 'proper' person.

The vision of the 'proper' person revealed by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraits is typically one of a body enveloped. Clothing encases its wearer entirely, except for the face and the hands. Even the exposure of these features is tempered by linen at neck and wrist, by hats and beards, and by gloves. Furthermore, it is easy to discern in contemporary writings a corresponding fear of the consequences of being inadequately clothed. Having too few layers, or not being covered at all, was a continuing cause of anxiety to the writers of personal narratives, because of the danger to their health. For if inadequately covered one might catch cold, and having caught cold one might in turn be caught by illness, and even death. Ralph Josselin (1616-1683), the Essex Puritan cleric, was relieved one warm June that having worn less he did not take harm: 'This day I left of

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[5] Virginia LaMar, 'English Dress in the Age of Shakespeare', in *Life and Letters in Tudor and Stuart England*, ed. by Louis B. Wright and Virginia LaMar (Ithaca, 1962), pp. 383-426 (pp. 388, 389).

[6] Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, p. 435.

my head cap, and wore a thinner stomacher, I formerly left of my night wascoate, and found no damage thereby, and I hope I shall not now'.[7] Alice Thornton's (1627-1707) baby was not so lucky. In making the tragedy of this child's illness and eventual death understandable for herself, Alice explained, 'when he was about fourteen daies old, my pretty babe broake into red spots, like the smale pox, and through cold, gotten by thinner clothing then either my own experience or practice did accustom to all my children'.[8]

A similar fear recurs in Pepys's diaries. Though the cold penetrated different parts of his body, his head seemed particularly vulnerable. 'So to my office late, and home to supper and to bed, having got a strange cold in my head by flinging off my hat at dinner and sitting with the wind in my neck.' The following January brought a similar affliction. 'And then home to supper and bed, having a great cold, got on Sunday last by sitting too long with my head bare for Mercer to comb me and wash my eares.' Two months later it happened again. 'Home to supper and to bed - having got a great Cold, I think by my pulling off my periwigg so often.' It was not until the icy spring of two years later that Pepys next found himself with 'a great cold', so bad:

> that I am not able to speak [...] This cold did most certainly come by my staying a little too long bare-legged yesterday morning when I rose while I looked out fresh socks and thread stockings, yesterday's having in the night, lying near the window, been covered with Snow within the window, which made me I durst not put them on.[9]

Urban lifestyles, central-heating and thermal pollution insulate us from the full effects of seasonal change, and it is hard to remember how much more intense the experience of cold was four hundred years ago. In draftier rooms warmed with nothing but an open fire, there would have been no option but to use clothing as a protection against the cold. However, the function of dress as a protection, or a sealant, seems also to argue a different understanding of the body and its workings. In the dominant tradition of humoral medicine, health was seen as the proper balance of the four internal humours:

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[7] *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-1683*, ed. by Alan Macfarlane, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 3 (London, 1976), p. 170.

[8] *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*, Surtees Society, 62 (1875), p. 166.

[9] *Diary*, V, 277, 22 September 1664; VI, 21, 24 January 1665; VI, 89, 24 April 1665; VIII, 105, 9 March 1667.

blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile.[10] While a balanced state brought wellness, imbalance resulted in ill health and dis-ease. Either harmful or healthful, the environment was a powerful agent in this dynamic physical process, such things as weather, water, air, or astrological movements affecting the equilibrium of both individuals and nations. Thus cold was not just unpleasant, but the potential cause of minor or severe ailments. For example, 'whenever the skin and outer parts of the body suddenly get cold and become constricted so that the pores are blocked', then catarrh could 'ooze down', 'sometimes with great danger to the lungs'.[11] Similarly, deafness and pain in the ears 'cometh many times through cold', as also coughs and hoarseness.[12] More spectacularly, Saturn was said to govern diseases of a cold nature, such as leprosy, palsy, gout, consumption, 'and the like cold and Melancholick infirmities'.[13] In 1605 Lady Margaret Hoby (1571-1633) suffered from a pain in her shoulder that came 'by reason of Could', to which same cause Pepys ascribed discomfort in urinating.[14] Perhaps along similar lines, scientist Robert Hooke (1635-1703) wrote in his diary of having caught cold in his 'pole'.[15]

Remedies for cold disorders usually involved some 'hot' application. 'Venice treacle', for example, cured 'all paines of the head in man or woman that comes through cold', while a drink of claret, spices and sugar was said to be comforting to 'a cold

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[10] On early modern medical practices in general, see Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999); Andrew Wear, 'Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700', in *The Western Medical Tradition 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 215-361; Andrew Wear, *Health and Healing in Early Modern England: Studies in Social and Intellectual History* (Aldershot, 1998); Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge, 2000); Roy Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society in England, 1550-1860* (London, 1987); Hilary Marland and Margaret Pelling (eds), *Medicine, Religion and Gender in England and the Netherlands, 1450-1800* (Rotterdam, 1996); Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England* (London, 1998).

[11] Richard Lower, *De Catarrhis* (1672), trans. by Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine (London, 1963), p. 4.

[12] Richard Hawes, *The Poore-Mans Plaster-Box*, The English Experience, 664 (London, 1634; repr. Amsterdam, 1974), pp. 12, 16.

[13] George Simotta, *A Theater of the Planetary Houres For All Dayes of the Yeare*, The English Experience, 414 (London, 1631; repr. Amsterdam, 1971), p. 5.

[14] *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605*, ed. by Joanna Moody (Stroud, 1998), p. 214. For an example of Pepys's trouble see *Diary*, II, 241, 31 December 1661. Both these experiences are noted by Lucinda McCray Beier, *Sufferers and Healers: The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1987), pp. 221, 139. On Pepys's Galenic understanding of cold, and his health in general, see the companion volume, *Diary*, X, 172-76.

[15] *The Diary of Robert Hooke 1672-1680*, ed. by Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1968), p. 344. Also cited in Beier, *Sufferers and Healers*, p. 139.

stomacke'.[16] The author of *The Sufficiencie of English Medicines* recommended a long list of 'hot' plants and herbs, while Thomas Bonham included in his health advice the instructions for making an oil to help cold and moisture.[17] However, in the humoral tradition prophylaxis, or prevention, was no less important than therapeutics, or the cure.[18] If Ralph Josselin felt he had caught cold in the October of 1677 by the wearing of 'thin stockens', then it made sense for him to cover up more warmly.[19] Similarly, Pepys found himself 'mighty apt to take cold, so that this hot weather I am fain to wear a cloth before my belly'.[20] Clearly in the preventative fight against cold, clothing was a key defence. However, co-existing with beliefs about humoral imbalance, early modern medicine also pictured disease as a pollutant, or external invading danger.[21] Georges Vigarello, for example, explores how contemporary physiology pictured the skin as permeable, and the body therefore as being perpetually under threat of invasion from without.[22] If this was the case, it is easy to imagine how dress could come to be seen, in part, as a carapace which covered the vulnerable flesh beneath. It is apposite to remember Erasmus here, for whom clothing was 'the body's body'.[23]

This belief in the vulnerability of uncovered skin helps us to understand certain early modern images and practices. At first reading, the Puritan John Winthrop's (1588-1649) account of his first wife's death is almost unbearably moving, but also very alien. As the account of Thomasina's last days reveals, the dying woman was swathed in numerous layers of fabric:

But on Saterday morninge she beganne to complaine of could, and a little after

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[16] Hawes, *Poore-Mans Plaster-Box*, pp. 7, 41.

[17] Timothy Bright, *The Sufficiencie of English Medicines*, The English Experience, 854 (London, 1580; repr. Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 39-40. Thomas Bonham, *The Chyrurgeons Closet*, The English Experience, 31 (London, 1630; repr. Amsterdam, 1968), p. 178.

[18] Lindemann, *Medicine and Society*, p. 10.

[19] *Diary of Ralph Josselin*, p. 603.

[20] *Diary*, II, 129, 30 June 1661.

[21] Lindemann, *Medicine and Society*, pp. 10-11.

[22] Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1988).

[23] Desiderius Erasmus, *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium* (1530), trans, by Brian McGregor, in *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto, 1974-1997), *Literary and Educational Writings 3*, XXV, 269-89 (p. 278).

awakinge out of a slumber, she prayed me to sett my heart at rest, for now (she said) I am but a dead woman, for this hand (meaninge hir left hande) is dead allreadye, and when we would have persuaded hir that it was but numme with beinge under hir, she still constantly affirmed that it was dead, and that she had no feelinge in it, and desired me to pull off hir gloves that she might see it, which I did; then when they would have wrapped some clothes about it, she disliked it, tellinge them that it was in vaine, and why should they cover a dead hande: when I prayed hir to suffer it, she answered that if I would have it so she would, and so I pulled on hir gloves, and they pinned clothes about hir hands, and when they had doone she said O what a wretche was I for layinge my legge out of the bedd this night, for when I should pull it in againe it was as it had come throughe the coverlaye, (yet it seemed to be but hir imagination or dreame for the women could not perceive it).

As Saturday drew on Thomasine grew more feverish, and those waiting with her had to cover her hands again 'which laye open with her former strivinge'. Finally towards evening she suffered from chest pains and, it seems, had difficulty in breathing. To give her ease 'they were forced to cutt the tyeings of hir waystcote'.[24]

This image of a dying woman encased in bed linen, garments and gloves can thus become more approachable if we entertain a vision of the fragile body warmed, guarded and decorated by protective cloth. However, Margaret Pelling has made a further connection between the concealing nature of dress and early modern medical practice. Before the use of antibiotics, she notes, many accidents and diseases would have resulted in scarring and chronic failure to heal. In the crowded context of early modern urban growth, Pelling detects new sensitivity to these bodily imperfections - a sensitivity which she then links to the encasing and highly ostentatious dress. The clothes - hose, sleeves, gloves and ruffs - concealed, and the ostentation re-directed the eye from the body beneath to the fabric above.[25] Visually, blemishes and deformity were less noticeable beside the perfections of tailored fabric.

The notion of vulnerable flesh and protective apparel leads us to consider the cultural

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[24] John Winthrop, 'Experiencia', in *Winthrop Papers Volume 1 1498-1628* (Massachusetts, 1929), pp.185-88.

[25] Margaret Pelling, 'Appearance and Reality: Barber-Surgeons, the Body and Disease', in *London 1500-1700:The making of a Metropolis*, ed. by A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London, 1986), pp. 82-112.

positioning of those garments that we would call underwear. In form these consisted of a shirt for men and a smock for women. Both were full T-shaped garments, long to the wrist and falling well down the lower portion of the body.[26] Made almost always of linen, the most expensive garments used the finer grades, such as holland or cambric. These were often embroidered at neck and wrist, those points in the vestimentary topography where such undergarments were glimpsed as outer wear. The female smock (known in later periods as a shift or chemise) and the male shirt were functionally interchangeable. Lady Ann Fanshawe (1625-1680) wrote in her memoirs that her husband, captured by the Parliamentary forces during the Civil War, was visited by a well wisher, Lady Denham. Sir Richard asked her if he could borrow 'a shirt or two and some handkerchiefs'. Having none of her sons' at home, she 'feched him 2 smocks of her own'.[27]

Unlike women, men also wore linen drawers.[28] For females this sartorial lack presumably conferred a freedom of leg movement beneath skirts, and ensured privacy and convenience in the context of chamber pot use. However, the absence of drawers may also have brought the sort of vulnerability experienced by Elizabeth Numan. Assaulting her, a Batcombe man 'did violently take up the clothes of Elizabeth Numan of Wanstow up to her middle and showed her nakedness to many'. Similarly a Halse husbandman acting as procurer to his unwilling wife, offered those present that 'for a penny a piece they should

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[26] See Baclawski, *Guide to Historic Costume*, pp. 62-64, 178-81, 192; C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *The History of Underclothes* rev. edn (London, 1981), pp. 28-31.

[27] *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. by John Loftis (Oxford, 1979), p. 134.

[28] Baclawski, *Guide to Historic Costume*, traces the history of drawers wearing to the Middle Ages for men, and to the nineteenth century for women (p. 92). The Cunningtons, *History of Underclothes*, more or less agree, describing male drawers as originally a medieval garment and stating that: 'It does not seem that Englishwomen wore drawers before the very end of the eighteenth century' (p. 36). Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, concurring on male wear, puts the date of women's donning of drawers even later, after about 1850 (p. 133). In a manner typical of the uncertainty and disagreements underlying dress history, however, J.L. Nevinson asserts that women *did* wear drawers, at least in the seventeenth century. Their general absence from inventories, he concludes, merely reflects their home-made status (J.L. Nevinson, entry on 'Dress and Personal Appearance', in *Diary*, X, 98-104). In part, Nevinson's evidence for this comes from Pepys's diaries, which describe his French wife, Elizabeth, as being dressed in the garment. While this is sometimes taken to indicate that Elizabeth Pepys had brought the custom with her from the continent, the historian Daniel Roche complicates the matter still further. In *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1996), Roche states that neither women *nor* men in France commonly wore drawers in this period (pp. 181-83). Interestingly, Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 4 vols (Glasgow, 1907), reports that Italian women 'in many places weare silke or linnen breeches under their gownes', a comment which also suggests that English women did not (IV, 222). Jenny Tiramani, 'Janet Arnold and the Globe Wardrobe: Handmade Clothes of Shakespeare's Actors', *Costume*, 34 (2000), 118-22, points out that as an alternative to wearing drawers, men might tuck their shirt tails between their legs (p. 121).

see his wife's privities'. Throwing her upon a board he 'did take up her clothes and showed her nakedness in most beastly and uncivil manner'.[29] So while encompassed - and possibly protected by - layers of linen, wool and silk, beneath them there was nothing to impede access. This is in striking contrast to the rest of the wardrobe which had to be laced, pinned, hooked and tied into position. Gaining access to the upper body required the negotiation of vestimentary complexity, but in simply raising the skirts one immediately arrived, in Donne's words, 'where thou' wouldst be embayed'.[30] 'Under the petticoat, fresh air', writes Daniel Roche. 'A conception of the body and of sexual relations is revealed by this convenient absence.'[31]

The practical function of shirts, smocks and drawers was twofold. They protected the wearer from their outer garments, and the outer garments from the dirt and secretions of the body beneath. Absorbing these impurities, linen underwear was changed and washed as often as personal circumstances allowed. Outer garments, although brushed and subject to other techniques of dry cleaning, were not laundered. It was only the inner layer of clothing in contact with the skin that was purified by washing and bleaching. Although the increasingly anxious standards of modern hygiene judge this practice unsavoury, it is parallel to the customs ordering the wear of a business suit. The shirt will be changed daily; the suit will be occasionally dry cleaned, but never washed.

The difference between the modern and the early modern regimen lies in the type of care bestowed on the body. The former locates hygiene in cleansing the skin of alien matter by the agency of water. The latter placed it in the removal of impurities generated from within and excreted to the body's surface. Thus shifting, or changing undergarments, constituted the 'dry wash'.[32] While necessary to health, this dry cleanliness also measured

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[29] Quoted in G.R. Quaife, *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1979), pp. 167-68.

[30] John Donne, Elegy 18, 'Love's Progress'. In this mock elegiac poem, Donne advises lovers against starting their amorous journey at their mistress' face. This way their progress is bound to be shipwrecked against the hazards and delays of eyes, lips, breasts, pubic hair, and so on. Instead the poem urges the direct route from the feet up, in which few bodily - and incidentally vestimentary - features delay arrival at 'the centric part'.

[31] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 182.

[32] Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness*, esp. pp. 17-20.

civility and good manners.[33] Fresh linen was a sign of a refined and disciplined body, in the same way as the 'white collar' description today signifies physical restraint but mental skill, and a standard of personal grooming. It is this set of beliefs concerning physiology, hygiene and civility that contextualizes the Duchess of Newcastle's (1624?-1674) description of her husband: 'He shifts ordinarily once a day, and every time when he uses Exercise, or his temper is more hot than ordinary'.[34] In contrast, it also locates Sir John Oglander's (1585-1655) contempt of an acquaintance, 'a heavy, dull, drunken fellow, slovenly and nasty, a man in wants, scarce having linen to keep him sweet'.[35] As Roche has concluded:

> Expressing a hygiene different from our own, conforming to the moral style of 'good manners', suited to the technological capacity of an age when water was scarce, the invention of linen marked the apogee of an aristocratic civilisation in which appearances were all important.[36]

Functionally hygienic and protective, these intimate linen garments were indelibly marked by their association with the body. Indeed, in this supremely cloth-conscious society, the boundaries blurred between the two, and the second skin of cloth became metaphorically indistinguishable from the body's 'natural' covering. For both, the index of beauty and desirability was fineness of texture and whiteness of appearance. It was a pretty sight watching the young Henry VIII play at tennis, 'his fair skin glowing through a shirt of the finest texture'.[37] Not literally possible, the Venetian ambassador's description invites us to participate in an economy of beauty different from our own. For Henry's manly attributes are here visualized as grace, smoothness, whiteness, warmth and wealth. The latter, naturally, was fundamental since it purchased freedom from the roughening affects of physical labour, and also the finest, most expensive of linens. In Michael Drayton's poem, 'Edward the Fourth of Mistres Shore' (1619), beautiful costly textiles and

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[33] The classic text exploring emergent concepts of civility is Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols (Oxford, 1982).

[34] *The Lives of William Cavendishe, Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. by Mark Antony Lower (London, 1872), p. 193.

[35] *A Royalist's Notebook: The Commonplace Book of Sir John Oglander of Nunwell*, ed. by Francis Bamford (London, 1936), p. 69.

[36] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 178.

[37] Quoted in Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914* (London, 1996), p. 16.

skin are merged still more markedly:

> If thou but please to walke into the Pawne
> To buy thee Cambricke, Callico, or Lawne,
> If thou the whitenesse of the same wouldst prove,
> From thy more whiter Hand plucke off thy Glove;
> And those which buy, as the Beholders stand,
> Will take thy Hand for Lawne, Lawne for thy Hand.[38]

The bodily associations carried by shirts and smocks extended to other items worn next to the skin: bands, cuffs and ruffs. Similarly, their excellence lay in the attribute of whiteness, fineness of fabric or decoration, and the elaborate care required to keep them laundered, starched and shaped. Furthermore, these garments were found at the visual borders between body and clothing, thus helping to separate public from private space.[39] Being neither wholly textile nor entirely skin, their lacy texture mediated between the two. Containing something of each, these items managed to frame both the body and its clothing; whiteness and lightness isolating head and hands, and contrasting with rich surrounding fabrics. Paradoxically, a lot of the power of these garments derived from a diminution, or even an absence in their form. For it is the space between the threads that makes the lace, and insubstantiality that renders linen so fine as to be gauzy and transparent. This airy lightness frothing abundantly at the borders of dress is fundamentally luxurious.[40] Unlike the hidden linen of smock and shirt, the visible manifestations at neck and wrist changed form over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, while varying in shape their significance remained constant: a light, white luxury that increased the desirability of skin and cloth alike. Pepys was clear about the social and aesthetic value of linen, and its fundamental importance in presenting a well-dressed persona. 'I do find

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[38] *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford, 1961), II, 247-55 (p. 249). The Pawn was the area on the south side of the Royal Exchange which housed stalls selling items of fashionable wear. Among the retailers and artisans were haberdashers, milliners, seamstresses and starchers. For discussion of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century fashion trade see Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I* (London, 1988), pp. 74-89; and Ashelford, *Art of Dress*, pp. 44-53, 76-85, 110-119.

[39] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 154, 163.

[40] An interesting similarity exists between neck and wrist linen and Barthes's decoding of washing powders. The foaming variety plays into our conceptions of luxury: it is abundant, lacks apparent usefulness, gratifies us by presenting matter as airy and light, and by producing 'a large surface of effects out of a small volume of causes' signifies spirituality above gross physical restraints, see Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (London, 1993), p. 37.

myself much bound to go handsome; which I shall do in linnen, and so the other things may be all the plainer.' Eleven days later saw him putting this sartorial plan into action. 'Got me ready in the morning and put on my first new lace-band; and so neat it is, that I am resolved my great expense shall be lace-bands, and it will set off anything else the more.'[41] Put rather cynically, 'Fine linen was a necessity if you wanted to appear other than what you were'.[42]

So, linen was intimate yet partially exposed to public view, and practical yet symbolically rich. Moreover, in the context of male tailoring and fabric supply, the production of these garments constituted a particularly female endeavour.[43] In the domestic setting this is unsurprising, as regardless of a woman's rank needlework was an appropriate and needful female occupation.[44] However, in the neighbourhood networks that constituted the local marketplace, and in the large scale trading of the city, the sewing of linen items was generally both undertaken and supervised by women. This situation is glimpsed in the account books of the Reverend Giles Moore (1617-1697). Among his carefully kept records the Sussex cleric itemized the expenses incurred concerning his personal and household linen. These included regular payments to female artisans. For example, on 21 March 1663/4 Moore 'Bought of G.[oodwife] Reading 10 Ells of flaxen cloath above a yard broad' for which he paid £1 7*s*. 6*d*. Two months later he 'Pay'd the Wid: James for the whiting of it 1^{s} 8^{d}'. Beneath this entry, though not until the following year 1665, Moore noted, 'Pay'd R$^{d.}$ Harlands wyfe for making mee 3 New shirts & marking Caps', a commission which cost 1*s*. 8*d*. Mistress Harland was noted on other occasions too, such as when she received payment 'for making 6 Bonds [bands] at 3^{d} the paire 1^{s} 6^{d} & 2^{d} a paire for 3 paire of Cuffes 6^{d} & Halfe a Q^{ter} of an Ell of Cloath which she bought to make

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[41] *Diary*, III, 216, 8 October 1662; 228, 19 October 1662.

[42] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p. 158.

[43] The classic account of the economic circumstances of women's lives in this period is Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1919), in which she devotes a chapter to their role in the production of textiles (pp. 93-149). Merry E. Wiesner, 'Spinsters and Seamstresses: Women in Cloth and Clothing Production', in *Re-Writing the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago, 1986), pp. 191-205 discusses the increasing exclusion of women from the professionally organized spheres of early modern textile manufacture.

[44] Ashelford, *Art of Dress*, p. 29 in describing elite dress, states that the 'lady of the house' usually made and embroidered her own smock. However Naomi Tarrant, *The Development of Costume* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 117 states that by the late seventeenth century wealthy women probably only embroidered personal linen, leaving the actual sewing to a semi-professional sempstress.

stocks 6[d] Pay'd her at Walstead for All of Them'.[45]

The most significant market controlled by women was that of supplying linen for the monarch; or as the wage bill for Julian Elliott, seamstress to Charles I put it, for 'Makeing his hig'Lynen for his Bodey'.[46] Royal accounts detail payments made to these women and the type of goods they supplied: shirts, bands, ruffs, night wear and stockings. The persons named in the accounts may have employed a number of needlewomen under them, and at some point towards the end of the seventeenth century the post of royal seamstress may have become more nominal - granting revenue rather than wages - than actual. The position was also combined with that of laundress to the King.[47] This dual role again reflects the fundamental importance of washing to the cultural positioning of linen, and also its situation within the confines of women's authority. Finally, along with the making of linen and its renewal through laundering, the eventual reuse of linen garments in other forms was also sited within predominantly female activities: clouts or nappies for the young, bandages for the injured and ill, 'rags' for menstrual bleeding.[48]

The bodily, and the feminized nature of linen, could give this commodity a powerful

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[45] *The Journal of Giles Moore*, ed. by Ruth Bird, The Sussex Record Society, 68 (1971), pp. 15, 48. The professional sempstress was limited to sewing linen and dress accessories until the end of the seventeenth century (Ashelford, *Art of Dress*, pp. 115-16). For a survey of their activities before and after this point, see Tarrant, *Development of Costume*, pp. 116-24.

[46] Quoted in Patricia Wardle, ' "Divers necessaries for his Majesty's use and service": seamstresses to the Stuart Kings', *Costume*, 31 (1997), 16-27 (p. 19). For information about Elizabeth's sempstresses, see Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds, 1988), pp. 219-27. The royal needlewomen were involved in making and embroidering linen goods. Richer work using more expensive textiles and threads was undertaken by the King's Embroiderer, see Patricia Wardle, 'The King's Embroiderer: Edmund Harrison (1889/90-1667) Part I: The Man and his Milieu', *Textile History*, 25 (1994), 29-60; and 'Edmund Harrison (1595-1677): The King's Embroiderer. Part II: His Work', *Textile History*, 26 (1995), 139-84. In *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* rev. edn, (London, 1996), Rozsika Parker explores the historical context in which, between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, decorative needlework moved from being a non-gendered artistic production for use in the public sphere, to being a domestic craft pursued by female amateurs. Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Three Ways to be Invisible in the Renaissance', in *Renaissance Culture and The Everyday*, ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 183-203 looks at women's needlework as simultaneously both a sign of obedience and chastity, and a cloak for more transgressive behaviours. The feminized nature of embroidery, needlework and spinning are also discussed by Linda A. Stone-Ferrier in Chapter 3 of *Images of Textiles: The Weave of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Society* (Ann Arbor, 1985). On pp. 95-100 she concentrates particularly on the representation of these handworks as an erotic metaphor. Lisa M. Klein, 'Your Humble Handmaid: Elizabethan Gifts of Needlework', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 50 (1997), 459-93 discusses the way elite women used gifts of their own embroidery to promote their interests and pursue broadly political ends.

[47] This was the situation from at least Elizabeth to James II, the only exception being in the household administration of Charles I, see Wardle, 'Seamstresses to the Stuart Kings', p. 20.

[48] As Daniel Roche points out, little is known about this aspect of female linen 'essential for a history of the body and sexuality', *Culture of Clothing*, p. 155, n. 13.

sexual aura. Lady Denham, who gave her smocks to the imprisoned Sir Richard Fanshawe, did so only because her sons were away and she had no shirts to give in their stead. Indeed, Lady Fanshawe's account has Lady Denham expressing unease at the intimacy sharing such linen implied. Having none of her sons at home she fetched Sir Richard two smocks and some handkerchiefs of her own, 'saying she was ashamed to give him them'.[49] Time and again Pepys purchased personal linen and obtained sexual attentions at the same time. For example, his long term mistress Betty Martin (née Lane) was a linen draper by trade, and it seems their relationship began, and continued, alongside the making, inspection and purchase of intimate garments. A typical passage from his diaries reveals Pepys alert to all the possibilities held within such transactions:

> So to [...] Westminster-hall - where I expected some bands made me by Mrs. Lane; and while she went to the starchers for them, I stayed at Mrs. Howletts, who with her husband were abroad, and only their daughter (which I call my wife) was in the shop; and I took occasion to buy a pair of gloves to talk to her, and I find her a pretty-spoken girl and will prove a mighty handsome wench - I could love her very well.
>
> By and by Mrs. Lane comes; and my bands not being done, she and I parted and met at the Crowne in the palace-yard, where we eat (a chicken I sent for) and drank and were mighty merry, and I had my full liberty of towsing her and doing what I would but the last thing of all; for I felt as much as I would and made her feel my thing also, and put the end of it to her breast and by and by to her very belly [...] Here I stayed late before my bands were done, and then they came; and so I by water to the Temple and thence walked home.[50]

Daniel Roche has written that there is a long history 'associating linen and the erotic'. Samuel Pepys, it seems likely, would have agreed.[51]

So now we can appreciate the cultural practices and beliefs that lay behind Gervase Markham's advice to homemakers, with regard to the provision of apparel for physical well-being:

> Our English housewife, after her knowledge of preserving and feeding her

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[49] *Memoirs of Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 134.

[50] *Diary*, IV, 234-35, 18 July 1663.

[51] Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, p.157.

> family, must learn also how, out of her own endeavours, she ought to clothe them outwardly and inwardly; outwardly for defence from the cold and comeliness to the person; and inwardly, for cleanliness and neatness of the skin, whereby it may be kept from the filth of sweat, or vermin; the first consisting of woollen cloth, the latter of linen.[52]

As well as providing the body with protection and cleanliness, however, clothing was also used to mark transitions, or to ease and facilitate the body in its passage from one state to another. For example, both Lady Ann Clifford and Ralph Josselin marked the age and progress of their children in terms, not of the calendar, but of clothing. Josselin entered in his diary on 14 January 1663/4, that 'this day Rebekah was coated, lord clothe us with the garments of thy righteousnes in Christ Jesus'. [53] Little Rebekah Josselin had moved past the need for formative swaddling, and had been dressed in childhood coats. Likewise, in her diary entries, Lady Clifford does not mention Margaret's age. The milestones she records are sartorial ones.

> Upon the 1st I cut the Child's strings off from her Coats and made her use tags alone, so as she had 2 or 3 falls at first but had no hurt with them.
>
> The 2nd, the Child put on her first coat that was laced with Lace, being of Red Bays.

Almost two years later, 'This day the Child did put on her crimson velvet Coat laced with silver Lace, which was the 1st velvet Coat she ever had'.[54]

These parents understood developmental milestones in terms of dress, a process that had started right from, or even before, birth. When Jane Hook wrote to tell her aunt, Lady Joan Barrington (d. 1641), of her pregnancy she received in reply gifts of linen, for which she gave 'harty thankes'. Lady Joan's own daughter asked, via her husband, for a similar gift. She wished 'that shee might begg some cloutes of you, being destitute her selfe, and if you could spare her a paire old sheetes you might doe her a pleasure'.[55] This gathering

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[52] Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife* (1615), ed. by Michael R. Best (Montreal, 1994), p. 146.

[53] *Diary of Ralph Josselin*, p. 504.

[54] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, pp. 66, 83. Lady Clifford refers to Margaret's leading strings, which were very similar to the harness and reins used for toddlers today.

[55] *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632*, ed. by Arthur Searle, Camden 4th ser., 28 (London, 1983), pp. 174, 191. In *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing (London, 2000), pp. 191-92, there is a letter transcribed from Lettice Gawdy to her father,

together of sheets and towels, linen for the baby, and personal linen for herself, was an almost universal activity for expectant mothers.[56] These preparations had of course a practical function, but also signalled the child's imminent arrival, and helped structure the actual experience of birth.[57] After delivery and cleansing, the new baby was swaddled, a custom which utilized the protective and sustaining properties of clothing (Fig. 31). For the human form was thought to be especially vulnerable after emerging from the shelter of the womb. Unformed and defenceless, its pliant, malleable limbs needed to be straightened

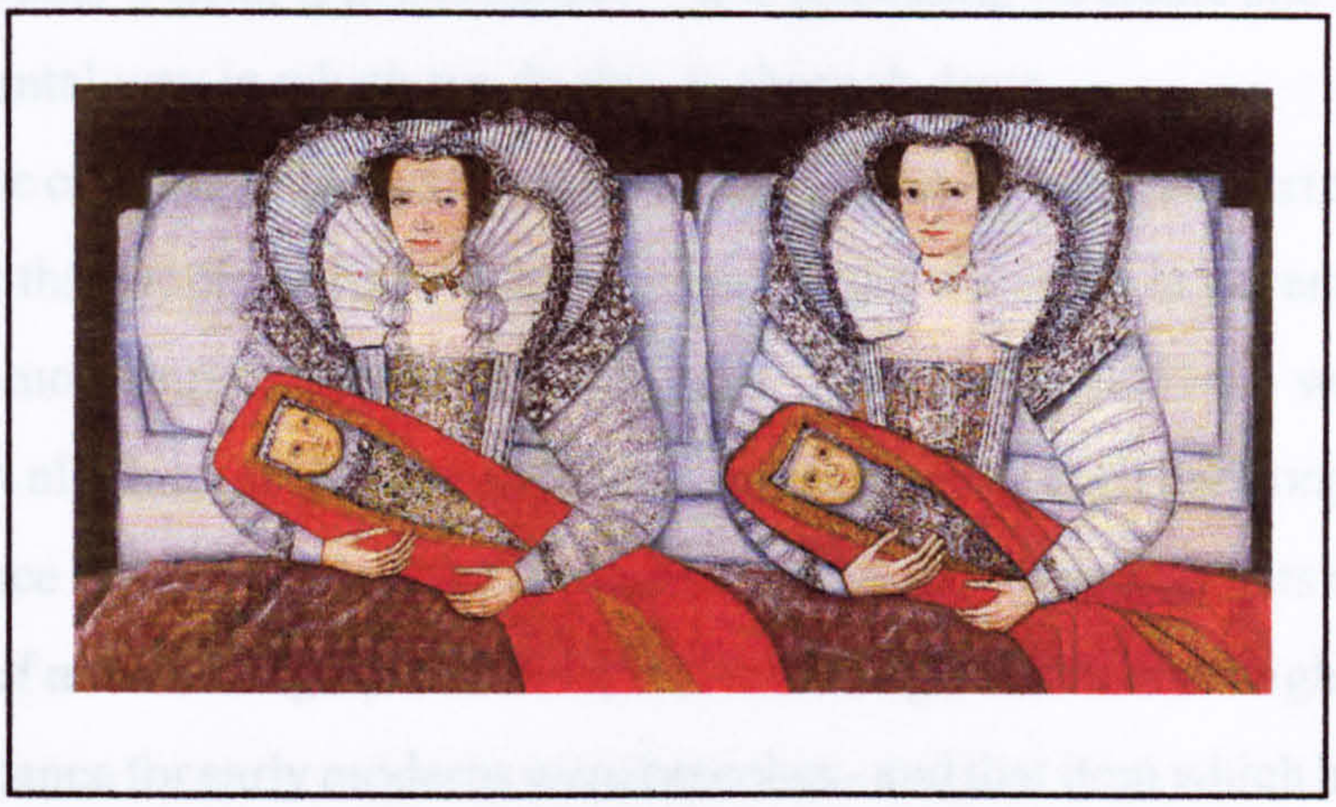

Figure 31: The Cholmondeley Sisters, *c.*1600-10, British School
Source: Scarisbrick, *Tudor Jewellery*

and moulded to prevent deformity and ensure healthy growth. In this practice, George Vigarello has written, 'the swaddling clothes themselves are endowed with corrective power'.[58] The sensation of firm binding brought about by swaddling seems also to comfort a new-born infant and, as Adrian Wilson has pointed out in an interpretation much easier on modern sensibilities, sends it to sleep.[59]

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making similar requests of Lettice's mother. She requires 'some clouts', 'some old shirts', and 'the yellow taffeta quilt'.

[56] David Cressy, *Birth , Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 50-51.

[57] On the delivery and lying-in, including the use of linen cloths and clothing, see Doreen Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 79-86; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, pp. 80-84; Adrian Wilson, 'The Ceremony of Childbirth and its Interpretation', in *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. by Valerie Fildes (London, 1990), pp. 68-107, esp. 70-83.

[58] Georges Vigarello, 'The Upward Training of the Body', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. by Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, 3 vols (New York, 1989), II, 148-99, (p. 171).

[59] Wilson, 'The Ceremony of Childbirth', p. 93.

Right from the earliest moments, then, clothing provided a way of thinking about, and undergoing, the process of maturation. Fundamental to this process was the establishment of a gendered identity. To explore this point further it is useful to adopt a distinction raised by certain feminist theorists, who clarify matters by separating sex from gender. The former is a biological given - the type and collection of physiological characteristics with which we are born.[60] Gender, as opposed to sex, arises from how our biological bodies act in the world. It is what we do, how we behave, what we say. Gender, to use Judith Butler's term, is performative.[61] It is something we create and re-create daily; and a fundamental way in which we do this, is through dress.

While the clothing of babies in pink or blue is for us a powerful ascription of gender, it is not an act that would have been meaningful in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Similarly, our most important signifier of gender - the wearing of skirts - was also without meaning when all children graduated from swaddling to the caps and long coats of early childhood. Since boys and girls alike dressed in full skirts, these garments imposed on the wearer a kind of neuter category of infancy. Instead the garments most highly imbued with gender significance for early moderns were breeches - and that item which held and shaped the female torso - the corset or stiffened bodice.

The donning of these particular garments was crucial to the performance of gender. For a child, or a child's parents, it simultaneously marked a formative moment in male or female identity, and *was* that identity made visible. An analogous case would be a girl's first bra. Sometimes - and most appropriately given the importance of the garment in teaching gendered identity - called a 'training bra', the AA cup is not 'needed' by the

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[60] I am deliberately refraining from applying the bi-polar labels of male and female here, since it seems that the incidence of 'mixed' or 'incomplete' sets of genital characteristics is more common at birth than our particular culture would have itself believe. A continuum of sexed bodies is certainly viable as an alternative model to our current one of polar difference.

[61] Butler surveys the main theoretical positions with regard to gender, sex and identity. However, she goes much further in her understanding of performative gender, presenting the sexed body as a discursively produced entity that does not pre-exist gender, but is itself a gendered category. She thus collapses the distinction between the two, and profoundly challenges our notions of 'naturalness', see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1990), esp. pp. 1-34, 128-141. On sex and gender in the early modern period specifically, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA, 1990); Anthony Fletcher, 'Men's Dilemma: The Future of Patriarchy in England1560-1660', *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 6th ser., 4 (London, 1994), pp. 61-81; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, 1995); Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge, 1980); Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998); Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2000).

wearer for support. It is, instead, one of the ways in which femaleness is signalled and created in contemporary western society. For Ann Clifford the stiffened garment that her daughter first wore in April 1617 performed the same function. 'The 28th was the first time the Child put on a pair of Whalebone Bodice.'[62] Lady Margaret Sackville was two years and nine months old.

Taking place at a later age - usually between six to eight years - the breeching of boys was perhaps even more significant. It marked the transition from the female dominated world of the nursery, to being more in men's company and tutelage. In other words, once breeched the child's social context and behaviour were expected to change. The touching and witty letters written from Lady Anne North (d. 1684) to her son help us to appreciate how important and proud a moment this could be in the early modern household. Sir Francis North (1637-1685), Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and future Lord Chancellor, had been widowed with three children in the November of 1678. His mother, Lady Anne, took the children to live with her at her home, Tostock. On 10 October 1679 she wrote from there to Sir Francis, to describe to him his son's big sartorial moment. The letter, as an exceptional description of the performance of gender through clothing, is worth quoting in full:

> You cannot beleeve the great concerne that was in the whole family here last Wednesday, it being the day that the taylor was to helpe to dress little Ffrank in his breeches in order to the making an everyday suit by it. Never had any bride that was to be drest upon her weding night more hands about her, some the legs and some the armes, the taylor butt'ning and other putting on the sword, and so many lookers on that had I not had a ffinger amongst them I could not have seen him. When he was quit drest he acted his part as well as any of them, for he desired he might goe downe to inquire for the little gentleman that was there the day before in a black coat, and speak to the men to tell the gentleman when he came from school that here was a gallant with very fine cloths and a sword to have waited upon him and would come againe upon Sunday next. But this was not all, for there was great contrivings while he was dressing who should have the first salute, but he sayd if old Lane had been here she should, but he gave it me to quiett them all. They are very fitt,

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[62] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, p. 55.

everything, and he looks taler and prettyer than in his coats. Little Charles reioyced as much as he did, for he jumpt all the while about him and took notice of everything. I went to Bury and bo[t] everything for another suitt, which will be finisht upon Saturday, so the coats are to be quite left off upon Sunday. I consider it is not yett terme time and since you could not have the pleasure of the first sight I have resolved you should have a full relation from

Yo[r] most aff[nate] Mother,

A. North.

When he was drest he asked Buckle whether muffs were out of fashion because they had not sent him one.

Lady Anne followed up this letter with another two days later, in which she wrote:

Dear Son,

I thank you for sending me so perticular an account of the little ones' ages, which I think as forward children for these times as can be. I gave you an account in my last that this day was designed wholly to throw off the coats and write man, and great good fortune it was to have it a fayre day. It was carried with a great deale of privacy purposly to surprise Mr. Camborne, and it tooke so well as to put him to the blush as soone as he saw him in the church, w[ch] pleased Frank not a little.[63]

Interestingly, this loving woman did not, until informed, know the detail of her grandchildren's ages. Significant in the process of little Frank's development was not his relationship to the calendar, but his relationship to his clothes. The day he put on his breeches was the day he could 'throw off his coats and write man'.

Paul Griffiths, in his work on youth in this period, spends a section defining what contemporaries understood by this term. Part of this includes a tabulation of different descriptors used by his court sources, and the age of the subject for whom they were employed. The descriptors - lad, maid, boy, girl, wench, child, youth, infant - are thus mapped with the ages that contemporaries felt best matched this term. So, for example, all occurrences of 'infant' were for children aged three or below, and most of them occurred for children in the first year of life. Of relevance for us, with one exception 'boy' was used

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[63] *The Autobiography of the Hon. Roger North*, ed. by Augustus Jessop (London, 1887), pp. 215-16, 216.

only of children aged eight or more. The exception is an instance where this term was applied to a child of six. Up to this age the dominant descriptive term for male and females alike, is the ungendered category of 'child'. While Griffiths does not offer this as a possibility, it seems too marked for coincidence that the onset of the male identity term 'boy', occured at around the time customary for breeching. It seems probable that breeching marked out the boundaries of gender in these cases, enabling the performance of boyhood.[64]

In this cloth-conscious society so attuned to sartorial possibilities, textiles and dress were fundamentally involved in bodily transitions and rites of passage. Many of these, like little Frank and his first breeches, were private or intimate experiences only accessible to us because of the chance survival of particular documents. Some, like christenings and weddings, had a greater public impact. However, perhaps the most public event and the one on which we are going to focus was the rite of burial. Among the upper orders the celebration of this ritual involved large numbers of people and large amounts of money, both things that leave us with relatively full sources today. Indeed, unlike other transitions its sartorial significance was carried chiefly by others, the fact of demise rippling outwards from the deceased and involving many in the performance of mourning. Thus, in 1663 when Catherine of Braganza fell seriously unwell, Pepys found himself facing a minor crisis of sartorial etiquette and financial caution. He had ordered a new cloak, but before its completion the Queen became ill. If this distant figure were not to recover he would be unable to wear his coloured and costly garment, for mourning would be *de rigueur*. Prudently he 'sent to stop the making of my velvett cloak, till I see whether she lives or dies'.[65] In contrast to the remote social obligation felt for such a faraway figure, Frances, widow of the Duke of Richmond, was prostrate when her husband died of an apoplexy in 1624. She took it 'extreme passionatly', and 'cut of her haire that day with divers other demonstrations of extraordinarie griefe'.[66] Between these two extremes, early moderns had a large vocabulary of apparel and behaviour which they used to articulate the fact of death, and it is towards this that we will now turn. Dressed in special gowns and hoods, bearing

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[64] See Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 19-34.

[65] *Diary*, IV, 344, 22 October 1663.

[66] *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), II, 545. Letter to Dudley Carleton, 21 February 1624.

gifts of gloves, scarfs and rings, who were 'these solemne mourners araid in black', and why were they so apparelled?[67]

Clothing Grief

Taking a small part in the bearing of sartorial meaning when compared to the mourners, the body of the deceased was nevertheless dressed in a special fashion. Following the same notions of cleanliness, protection and well-being accorded to the body when alive, the corpse was first washed and then shrouded. Cunnington and Lucas describe this as a universal custom of wrapping the body 'in what would promote comfort if it were living and give it decorum in death'.[68] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries corpse coverings were made, like the inner layers of clothing for the living, of linen. Under the winding sheet the body may or may not have been dressed in a shirt or smock, and possibly a cap or bonnet, too. Either the practice was variable, or it is the opinion of subsequent researchers that differs. Both using evidence from probate accounts, Clare Gittings contends that a shirt was part of the grave clothing, whereas Ian Mortimer suggests that in Berkshire at least, it was not. Julian Litten takes the middle ground, describing the custom of the deceased being dressed thus as having been introduced around the 1630s.[69] Presumably the use of underlinen in addition to the shroud, was dependent on the wealth of the estate, the rank of the deceased, the historical period of death and perhaps, too, the geographical location. Certainly by the time Lady Margaret Verney made her will in 1639, she was able to stipulate to her son, 'and lett noe strandger winde me, nor doe nott lett me bee striptte, but put me in a cleane smoke over me [...] and lett my fase be hid and doe you stay in the roome and see me wounde and layed in the firste coffin'.[70]

Sometimes the shroud was made by using a sheet from the household store, but most

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[67] Henry Barrow, *A Brief Discoverie of the False Church* (1590), in *The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590*, ed. by Leland H. Carlson (London, 1962), p. 460.

[68] Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Costume for Births, Marriages and Deaths* (London, 1972), p. 125.

[69] Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London, 1984), p. 112. Ian Mortimer, *Berkshire Probate Accounts 1583-1712*, Berkshire Record Society, 4 (Reading, 1999), p. xvii. Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London, 1991), p. 76.

[70] Frances Parthenope, Lady Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, 4 vols (London, 1892-1899), II, 19-20.

often it was a separate commodity.[71] By the last quarter of the seventeenth century it was possible to purchase them as off-the-peg, ready-made items.[72] In Ian Mortimer's transcription of Berkshire probate accounts, he found that in nearly all of them the cost of the shroud or winding sheet was included among the funeral expenses.[73] Towards the end of the seventeenth century the expenditure on this item began to increase, but for the hundred years from 1580 to 1680 the average cost was around three to four shillings. However, clearly this sum varied according to the shroud's quality or quantity. Thus in 1613 Thomas Saunders's executrix paid out seven shillings and four pence, 'his shrowde being verie large'. Similarly, in 1620 John Stevens alias Hawkes required 'three Ells of Holland for his shroud' at a cost of eight shillings, whereas in 1628 the executrix of Elizabeth Garrat's estate needed only 'Two ells hollan to make a shroud for the deceased' at a charge of four shillings.[74] That there were differences in the grade of linen can be inferred from the cost of two sets of grave clothes from 1615. Gentleman, John England Edwards whose inventoried estate totalled £510, was buried in a shroud costing eight shillings; Bridget Benwell, a widow worth a little over nineteen pounds, was wrapped in linen costing only two shillings and sixpence.[75]

Late in the seventeenth century, however, the government of Charles II passed a series of measures that attacked the customary practices of shrouding in linen. This classic protectionist strategy designed 'for the Encouragement of the Woollen Manufactures of this Kingdome', decreed that all burial and grave clothes be made entirely of wool.[76] Although defaulters were obliged to pay a penalty of five pounds which was to go to the parish poor, this initial act of 1666 lacked a mechanism for enforcement and was

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[71] Once again in Gittings's research she found the former to be the case (*Death, Burial*, p. 111), while in Mortimer's investigation the latter held true (*Berkshire Probate Accounts*, p. xvii).

[72] Litten, *English Way of Death*, pp. 72, 74.

[73] Mortimer, *Berkshire Probate Accounts*, p. xvii. The numbers of probate accounts still in existence is relatively low. In Yorkshire only seventy-five executors' and administrators' accounts survive, all of them from between the years 1607 and 1646 (BIHR, Prob. Ex. 1607-1646). None of these accounts itemize the cost of a shroud. For a background to probate accounts as a source see Amy Louise Erickson, 'An Introduction to Probate Accounts', in *Records of the Nation*, ed. by G.H. Martin and P. Spufford (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 273-85; Clare Gittings, 'Probate Accounts: A Neglected Source', *The Local Historian*, 21 (1991), 51-59; Mortimer, *Berkshire Probate Accounts*, 'Introduction', pp. vii-xxx.

[74] Mortimer, *Berkshire Probate Accounts*, pp. 83, 106, 121.

[75] Ibid., pp. 91, 92.

[76] 18 & 19 Car. II, c. 4 (1666).

apparently unsuccessful. It was therefore followed by two further laws in 1678 and 1680.[77] These secondary measures required the executor or relations of the deceased to bring before the officiating cleric a written affadavit stating that the corpse was not interred in 'any other Materiall but Sheeps Wooll onely'.[78] The cleric then entered compliance with the law into a special burial register. If the affadavit was not forthcoming, then the deceased's estate was liable to forfeiture to the above-mentioned sum of five pounds, which was then given to poor relief.

Although technically remaining in force until their repeal in 1814, just how effective these laws were is not clear.[79] Julian Litten describes them as having been 'highly unpopular', and N.B. Harte, although implying they were more rigorously applied than similar measures ordering the apparel of the living, calls them 'much-ridiculed'.[80] Judging from the probate account of Margaret Marten, the burial in wool acts were at least partially enforced. Buried in 1683, her executor paid thirteen shillings and sixpence for the combined costs of tolling the bell, digging her grave, and 'the affidavit made of her being buryed in woollen'.[81] However, no other accounts of the relevant period in the Berkshire transcriptions mention an affadavit, or the five pound penalty, or even specify the type of material used to make the shroud. For the wealthy, though, the fine would have been a negligible amount - a small price to pay for the comeliness of linen.

While the way in which the dead were dressed remained more or less unchanged throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, funeral rites, and the practices of the mourners, underwent certain shifts.[82] The most abrupt and obvious point of development came with the Reformation, when the powerful winds of doctrinal change blew away Purgatory. Essentially a waiting room for Paradise, souls were condemned to Purgatory until they had expiated the sins committed in their earthly existence, and were considered

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[77] 30 Car. II, c. 3 (1678) and 32 Car. II, c. 1 (1680).

[78] 30 Car. II, c. 3.

[79] 54 Geo. III, c. 108.

[80] Litten, *English Way of Death*, p. 74. N.B. Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', in *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. by D.C. Coleman and A.H. John (London, 1976), pp. 132-65 (p. 152).

[81] Mortimer, *Berkshire Probate Accounts*, p. 224.

[82] For a clear and complete account of changing funeral practices and mourning rites, see Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), esp. pp. 255-94.

fit for entry into heaven. Their stay in the purgatorial ante-chamber could, however, by shortened by the efforts of those who remained alive. Through funerary practices, and other deeds such as alms-giving, fasting and the saying of Masses, the living could intercede for the dead and speed their upward progress.[83] The Reformation, however, demolished this intercessionary edifice. With Protestant theology denying its efficacy, or even validity, the Post-Reformation funeral ritual became concerned, instead, with commemoration.[84]

Nigel Llewellyn describes this fundamental change in principle as the change to preserving the deceased's social body. Unlike the natural body, which died and decayed and whose unsavoury transitions were managed by embalming, coffining and burial, the social body existed in memory, familial connections and visual artefacts. 'In the process of dying,' in Post-Reformation ritual, 'the death of the natural body was followed by efforts to preserve the social body as an element in the collective memory.'[85] Given this, it is no surprise that the great heraldic funerals, although first appearing in the late fifteenth century, reached their height of splendour and popularity after the Reformation.[86]

These vast public affairs were organized by the College of Arms, and were only available to armigerous families.[87] Run along lines of strict protocol they were massively

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[83] On Purgatory see Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1984); John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 30-31; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 338-76; Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996), pp. 25-26; Rosemary Horrox, 'Purgatory, Prayer and Plague, 1150-1380', in *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Peter Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester, 1999), pp. 90-118; Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall, 'Introduction: Placing the Dead in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge, 2000). This last essay also provides a valuable overview of the historiography concerning the influence of doctrinal change on conceptions of the dead.

[84] Ralph Houlbrooke traces the main effects of the Reformation on funerary practice in 'Death, Church and the Family in England Between the Late Fifteenth and the Early Eighteenth Centuries', in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. by Ralph Houlbrooke (London, 1989), pp. 25-42.

[85] Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in English Death Ritual c.1500-c.1800* (London, 1991), p. 47.

[86] According to Sir Anthony Wagner the first known occasion of heralds participating in a funeral was in 1463, see Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967), p. 106. In *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, David Cressy also suggests that expenditure on funerary display may have increased after the Reformation as a consequence of the dwindling of the intercessory structure (p. 412).

[87] On heraldic funerals see Gittings, *Death, Burial*, Chapter 8, pp. 166-87; Litten, *English Way of Death*, Chapter 7, pp. 173-94; Llewellyn, *Art of Death*, Chapters 10 and 11, pp. 60-72; Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England 1570-1625* (Woodbridge, 1997), Chapter 1, pp. 15-36; J.F.R. Day, 'Death be very proud: Sidney, Subversion, and Elizabethan heraldic funerals', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. by Dale Hoak (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 179-203.

expensive, complicated to arrange, and involved huge numbers of people. For the former, Lawrence Stone estimates that at their height 'these ostentatious rituals' cost little less than a year's income.[88] In terms of the latter, the size of the proceedings reflected the importance of the deceased. Lady Burghley's funeral procession totalled 315 mourners, Philip Sidney's 700, and Elizabeth I had an astonishing 1600 people participating in her obsequies.[89] Clearly such vast and complex affairs took considerable time to organize, particularly since the rules of protocol decreed that the rank and sex of the deceased determined the rank, sex and number of the principal mourners. Thus only particular people could fulfil these roles and the logistics of marshalling the different participants added to the time delay between death and eventual burial. With a minimum wait for interment of several weeks after death, embalming was a necessity. Anne of Denmark's funeral was dogged by delays caused on all these fronts. Although she died on 2 March 1619, the proposed date for the ceremony was repeatedly postponed. On 24 April Chamberlain complained at length:

> The day of the Quenes funerall is not yet set downe, though yt be more then time yt were don [...] the number of mourners and the whole charge spoken of is beyond proportion, above three times more then was bestowed upon Quene Elizabeth, which proceeds not of plentie for they are driven to shifts for monie, and talke of melting the Quenes golden plate and putting yt into coine [...] Some difficultie there wilbe to marshall the Ladies and who shalbe cheife mourner, for the Lady of Arundell professes not to geve place to the Countesse of Nottingham, that pretends yt in her husbands right [...] the Countesse of Northumberland and divers others are likewise saide to take the same exception to her, and will by no meanes go behind, so that to stint some part of the strife (yf yt be possible) the old Marchionesse of Northampton is sent for yf by any meanes she can supplie the place.[90]

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[88] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), p. 575. Keith Thomas points out that with alms-giving and the cost of intercessory prayers, a substantial proportion of resources in medieval society was given over to the dead. He fails to note that the cost of commemorative funeral practice means the same could be said of early modern society, see *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), p. 603.

[89] HMC, *Salisbury*, 13, p. 409. Day, 'Death be very proud', p. 181. Woodward, *Theatre of Death*, pp. 17-18, and Appendix 1.

[90] *Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, 232-33.

The Queen was eventually buried on 13 May, over two months after her death.

The purpose of these public displays was not to intercede on the deceased's behalf or to hasten, by attentive prayer, the soul's heavenly progress. Rather, it was to commemorate the deceased's role within society and to perpetuate this beyond the apparent dead end of mortality. Death disrupted the ranks of the elite; the heraldic funeral sought to seal over the rupture and smooth it into continuity. In other words, the heraldic funeral was orchestrated 'with the emphasis very much in the preservation of the social body'.[91]

Unfortunately the details of costs for heraldic funerals are, by and large, not available. Since the probate accounts for the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (the jurisdiction that most often processed the affairs of the elite) do not survive, we do not have access to a source which for those of the middling and lower ranks in other jurisdictions, reveal the breakdown of the executors' management of a deceased's estate and funeral.[92] However, information remains to tell us of the major role that mourning cloth and clothing - or blacks - played in the heraldic ritual. The cloth from which the garments were made was supplied by the estate, and given to the mourners on the basis of their rank according to rules laid down by the College of Arms. Thus the amount, cost and quality of fabric was distributed according to the recipient's social status. For example, at the burial of a king or prince, a duke was allowed 'for his Gowne Slopp and Mantle xvi yards of x^{s} the yerde and livery for xviii servants'. Reflecting the nuances of nobility, an earl was also allowed sixteen yards of cloth, but at only eight shillings the yard, and was supplied with liveries for twelve servants. Yeomen and pages, near the bottom of the hierarchy, were presented with four yards of cloth.[93] So Phineas Pett (1570-1647), in the preparation for the funeral of Prince Henry in 1612, explained that he 'had black cloth delivered to me according to the place I was ranked in above stairs, which was a gentleman of the Privy Chamber extraordinary'.[94] When Anne of Denmark's funeral was finally staged, Chamberlain was disappointed that despite the large number of participants in the

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[91] Llewellyn, *Art of Death*, p. 60.

[92] Clare Gittings, *Funerals in England 1580-1640: The Evidence of Probate Accounts* (unpublished B. Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), p. 15.

[93] Bod. Lib. Ashmole MS 857, fol. 188.

[94] *The Autobiography of Phineas Pett*, ed. by E.G. Perrin, Navy Records Society, 51 (1918), p. 101.

procession, the Lords and Ladies made but 'a pore shew'. This may have been in part due to the burdens, quite literally, of rank, for 'they came laggering all along even tired with the length of the way and waight of theyre clothes, every Lady having twelve yardes of broade cloth about her and the countesses sixteen'.[95]

Figure 32: The Funeral of Sir Philip Sydney, 1588. Engraving by T. de Bry
Source: Taylor, *Mourning Dress*

As well as stipulating the quantity and quality of mourning cloth due to any given participant, rules also governed the eventual form and wear of the garments (Fig. 32). A long-lived example of these were the orders proposed by Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII, regulating the mourning apparel of the ladies at Court. First issued around 1493 the provisions were repeatedly re-copied into the seventeenth century, and explained, according to rank, what garments were to be worn and how.[96] The orders operated according to the general principle that those of the most elevated ranks had garments of the greatest length. For example, the Queen was to have 'a tippet at the hoode lyenge of a goode length', whereas the King's daughters, unmarried sisters and aunts, although wearing all things as the Queen, had 'the tippetts somewhat shorter.' Likewise, while a countess might wear her tippet more or less to the ground, those of the Queen's household gentlewomen must be only a yard long.[97] However, as well as hierarchies expressed

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[95] *Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, 237.

[96] A sixteenth-century copy is to be found in BL Harley MS 6064, fols 27ʳ-28ʳ. The College of Arms has a seventeenth-century version in Vincent MS 151, fols 105-108.

[97] BL Harley MS 6064, fols 27ʳ, 28ʳ, 27ᵛ.

through scale, the regulations detailed differences of textile. So if furred, the Queen's mantle used ermine, as did that of a duchess, whereas a countess had only miniver.[98] Finally, the rules prescribed the manner in which these garments had to be worn. The tippets of the most important were to hang down behind the wearer, displaying their differing lengths and widths. Those of lesser mourners such as lords' daughters and knights' wives were 'to be pynned vpon the arme'. The gentlewomen of the household had to pin theirs 'vpon the syde of the hoode', and chamberers bound theirs 'aboute their hedds'.[99] The wear of barbes, archaic head coverings derived from conventual apparel, also encoded such hierachies. Everyone not under the degree of a baroness 'to weare a barbe about the chynne. And all other as knightes wyfes to weare it under there throates: and other gentleweomen beneath the throte goyle'.[100] In this case the more enveloping was the garment, the more elevated the estate of the wearer. This was echoed by other heraldic orders pertaining to the wearing of hoods. Lesser mourners were enjoined to carry theirs over their shoulders, while the most important participants wore theirs well forward over the head 'wth their hoods hanginge farre over their eyes'.[101]

These detailed and rule-bound provisions are hard to grasp now and, if Elizabeth Russell's enquiries are anything to go by, were also difficult for contemporaries to master. Apparently of a careful disposition and feeling her demise imminent, Lady Russell wrote to Sir William Dethick, King at Arms, to clarify the requirements for her own funeral. She wished to know 'aduisedly and exactly in euery particuler' the prescribed number of participants and likely costs. This included 'the number of mourners due for my callinge beinge a Viscountesse of Birth, with their charge of blackes and the number of waittinge women for my selfe and the women mourners'.[102]

The vast number of participants at heraldic funerals, all of whom needed to be supplied with appropriate mourning, explains why the greatest cost of these rituals was, in

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[98] Ibid., fols 27^{r}, 27^{v}, 28^{r}.

[99] Ibid., fols 27^{v}, 28^{r}.

[100] Ibid., fol. 27^{v}. The seventeenth-century Vincent MS writes 'gule' for goyle', which the OED glosses as an obsolete term for gullet.

[101] BL Harley MS 6079, fol. 25^{v}.

[102] CA Vincent MS 151, fol. 325.

fact, black cloth.[103] At Sir Nicholas Bacon's funeral in 1578, £669 out of the total expenditure of £910, went on blacks. In 1596, £1079 was paid out for Lord Henry Hunsdon's funeral, £836 of which was for mourning cloth. Similarly, in 1604 £700 out of a total of £1060 was paid out for cloth at the Earl of Huntingdon's funeral; and eight years later at Robert Cecil's service, a staggering £1544 of a total £1977, was expended this way.[104]

Given the considerable proportion of the funeral costs that went on blacks, it is no wonder that one of the difficulties delaying Anne of Denmark's burial was the problem of paying for cloth. Chamberlain reported that 'the Quenes funerall is put of [...] unles they can find out monie faster, for the master of the ward-robe is loth to weare his owne credit thread-bare'.[105] It also explains the economy measures taken at the funeral of John, Earl of Rutland, in 1588. The previous Earl, his elder brother Edward, had died just the year before and the estate was still recovering from obsequies which involved about 560 people.[106] When John died so soon after, the Earl of Leicester and William Cecil wrote to the executors suggesting that 'the funeral should be hastened so as to abridge the charge of the household'. Following further advice for limiting the costs by limiting the number of mourners who needed to be clothed, they finished with the order that: 'To the intent that all superfluous charges should be spared [...] there is to be no charge of black for us or our servants'. In the event there were about 200 mourners,[107] and the blacks required still seem far from modest, including: twelve yards for the young Earl and six yards for his horse; five yards for each of eleven knights, plus thirty-three yards for their retainers; and five yards for each of six esquires. At the end of the list of male participants were the sixty yeoman ordinary and extraordinary who received a coat of a yard and a half, and thirty-six poor men who each were given a gown of three yards. Similarly on the female side, the

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[103] Gittings, *Death, Burial*, p. 181. Richard Greaves, *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis, 1981), p. 713. Lawrence Stone estimates that it represented about three quarters of the funeral expense, see *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 576.

[104] These figures, and their manuscript sources, are given in Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, Appendix 25, pp. 784-85. In addition Stone lists the funeral of the Earl of Huntingdon in 1596, for which a relatively modest amount of £532, out of £1393, was spent on blacks.

[105] *Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, 224. Letter to Dudley Carleton, 27 March 1619.

[106] Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 573.

[107] Ibid., p. 573.

Countess of Rutland had an allowance of twelve yards, whereas the six chamber and laundry maids each received three yards. However, the Earl's agent, Thomas Screven, seemed to feel the slight of straightened circumstances. 'I have provided black for the funeral, which is the best I could get at the rate set down, which was very mean, meaner than has been at any funeral for many years.'[108] As Ralph Houlbrooke suggests, underlining the funeral's function in cementing social standing, those 'which fell short of what observers thought appropriate to the status of the deceased attracted unfavourable comment'.[109]

Not only were the participants in the funeral procession supplied with mourning, but buildings were also 'dressed' in black cloth to signify regard for the deceased. This could be hired to save cost. At the Earl of Rutland's 'mean' funeral, four yards of cloth was bought for the hearse, and baize was hired to drape the hall, great chamber and church.[110] Again heraldic rules specified how this was to be done. A document entitled 'Hanging of Roomes' listed the different orders of gentility, and for each one specified how much of the room was to be draped, the number of chambers so treated, and the grade of cloth to be used.[111] Obviously the most elevated had a greater surface area of more rooms hung with more expensive fabric. The room where the body of royalty lay, for example, was to be hung with velvet, and the ceiling and floor lined with cloth. If the body were that of a viscount or baron, however, the room was hung only with cloth, was floored with baize, and the ceiling left bare. Churches were also dressed in this way. For heraldic funerals held at St Paul's blacks were hung about, among other places, the upper and nether choir, the communion table, pulpit and rood loft.[112] Funeral furniture, too, had to be made, or decorated with black. At Archbishop Parker's burial in 1575 the total cost of fabrics for the hearse, pall, cushions and cloth of estate, came to £136 18*s.* 8*d.*[113]

From early in the seventeenth century the heraldic funeral began a long decline, with

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[108] HMC, Rutland, 1, pp. 241, 242, 243. For more about this funeral see Greaves, *Society and Religion*, pp. 711-12.

[109] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family*, p. 292.

[110] Ibid., p. 243.

[111] Bod. Lib. Ashmole MS 840, fols 739-741.

[112] CA Vincent MS 151, fol. 161.

[113] CA Vincent MS 151, fols 292-292.

increasing numbers of the elite opting for 'private' rituals that were under their own control, and not that of the College of Arms.[114] Mourning cloth and clothing, however, continued to play an integral part. Certainly the wholesale distribution of blacks ceased, but among the immediate family and those intimately connected with the deceased, it was still an extremely important matter, and still extremely costly. George, Sir John Oglander's son, died in 1632 and Sir John was heart broken. He spent thirty-eight pounds 'to buy mourning clothes', a substantially greater sum than the twenty pounds he gave to his wife 'to find her apparel and other necessaries for the whole year'.[115] Buildings, too, continued to be draped in black. Roger North, another of Lady Anne's sons, arranged his house for the funeral procession of his brother, the economist Sir Dudley (1641-1691): 'from end to end, the great room in my house was put in mourning and lined down to the outward door'.[116] When arranging the funeral of his wife in 1670, the Earl of Denbigh sent a servant to London to hire 'black veluett to funish a roome with a Cloth of State of the same, and coverings of black veluett for the hearse and for six coach horses'. Moreover, while waiting the months for the vault to be ready for her coffin's interment, the Earl stipulated that 'my Chappell and Closet are ordered to be hung with cloth, that the decency of mourning may accompany my wifes herse'.[117]

Just as with the later burial in wool acts, the state sought to muscle in on this largesse

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[114] There seem to have been a range of reasons for this move away from rigid protocol to a more flexible burial celebration. As well as gaining the freedom to organize the event as the family wished, Clare Gittings sees the new funeral as supplying an arena which favoured the expression of private grief over public commemoration. This, she says building on Lawrence Stone's theory of the early modern family, is indicative of rising individualism, which was increasingly to grieve over the loss of a single person, rather than to celebrate the social position which they held in life (*Death, Burial*, esp. pp. 14, 175-76, 188-95). Stone notes, particularly among elite women, an increasing distaste for the embalming procedure that was necessary if the body were to be kept for burial at a much delayed heraldic funeral. However, as he also points out, these rituals did not actually require the presence of a corpse. On some occasions, such as the obsequies for the Duke of Richmond in 1624, the body had been buried long before, and in its stead the funeral was celebrated around a dressed effigy. However, the principal reason that Stone cites for the decline of the heraldic funeral is financial. There must, he writes, 'have been a dawning realisation that the cost incurred was out of all proportion to the prestige earned' (*Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 578-79). For the differences between 'public' heraldic interments and privately arranged burials see Ralph Houlbrooke, ' "Public" and "Private" in the Funerals of the later Stuart Gentry: Some Somerset Examples', *Mortality*, 1, (1996), 163-76; Paul Fritz, '"From Public to Private": the Royal Funerals in England, 1500-1830', in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. by Joachim Whaley (London, 1981), pp. 61-79; and Day, 'Death be very Proud', p. 183.

[115] *A Royalist's Notebook*, pp. 178-81, 237, 231.

[116] *Autobiography of Roger North*, p. 229. Letter from Roger North to Robert Foley.

[117] Bod. Lib. Ashmole MS 836, fols 130, 137.

and turn all funereal spending to good account. In the middle of a protectionist proclamation of 1622 aimed at boosting the wool trade, came the order:

> that when, and as often as upon the occasion of any Burials or Funerals, any Blacks be hereafter given or worne: That when such blackes and mourning stuffes shall bee onely of Cloth and Stuffes, made of the Wooll of this Kingdom, and not elsewhere, nor otherwise.[118]

Unfortunately for domestic wool production, there is no evidence that this proclamation was ever attended to.

Although the distribution of full mourning was now reserved for a relatively small circle of intimates, the seventeenth century saw a massive increase in the giving out of smaller tokens of grief - wearable items such as scarves, ribbons, rings and gloves.[119] Sometimes these gifts were a matter of bequest, stipulated by the deceased in his or her will. Such was the case of Sir William Calley (d. 1641), who requested that rings of remembrance be made in gold and given to certain of his family and friends. The rings, in common with conventional motifs, were also to have 'deathes heades all engraven, and over that enameled to give death the more lively countenaunce' (Fig. 33).[120] More often mourning accessories were dispensed by the executors as part of the funeral ritual, in much the same way as had governed the distribution of blacks. When Sir John Oglander's brother-in-law was buried with a great assembly of the gentry and all the town, 'gloves and ribbons' were 'given to all'.[121] As with the doling out of black cloth, mourners of more importance usually received

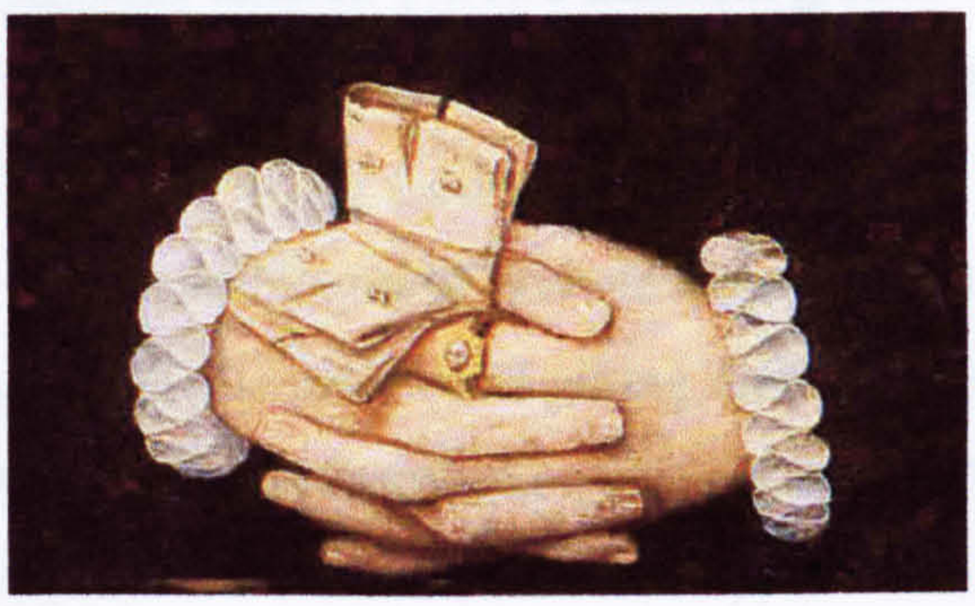

Figure 33: Portrait of a Man Wearing a Ring with a Skull,1567, Hans Eworth (detail)
Source: Scarisbrick, *Tudor Jewellery*

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[118] *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume I*, ed. by James Larkin and Paul Hughes (Oxford, 1973), p. 547.

[119] Houlbrooke, 'Death, Church, and Family', p. 35; Houlbrooke, 'Public and Private', p. 172; and David Cressy, 'Death and the Social Order: the Funerary Preferences of Elizabethan Gentleman', *Continuity and Change*, 5 (1989), 99-119 (pp. 112-13).

[120] PRO, SP16/479/21.

[121] *A Royalist's Notebook*, p. 124.

tokens of a greater number, or better quality. Sir Ralph Verney reported that his friend and neighbour, Sir Richard Pigott, had been laid to rest honourably and at considerable charge. 'Wee that bore up the pall had Rings, Scarfes, Hat-bands, Shamee Gloves of the best fashion and Sarsanet Escutcheons delivered to us; the rest of the Gentry had Rings, all the servants gloves.'[122]

The Berkshire probate accounts also reveal this careful gradation of giving. The evidence of Lady Mary Gardner's burial in 1642 is particularly interesting. She appears to have been given the full honour due to her rank and her father, as executor, kept thorough accounts. This included five shillings for hiring black cloth to hang about the church, threepence worth of tenter hooks for fixing up the mourning cloth in the chancel, sixpence for a man 'to looke to' the mourning cloth, and a further sixpence charge for the labour of hanging it. Twenty-nine shillings went on 'mourneinge gloves at the said deceasedes funerall', and a further fifteen shillings was spent on gloves to recompense the appraisers of the estate 'for their pains'. Ribbon was also 'given to persons that were at the deceasedes funerall', in two different grades. For seventy-two yards at 12*d.* the yard, the executor paid three pounds; for sixty-eight yards at 8*d.* the yard he was charged £2 5*s.* 4*d.*[123]

The collection of probate accounts also shows the increase over the seventeenth century of this practice of giving mourning tokens. Of the accounts dated before 1600, none include the distribution of these items. There are six accounts that do so for the first fifty years of the seventeenth century, and nine mentions in the second half of the century. Of these nine, eight occur after 1680. Replacing, for the wealthier in society, the social obligation of giving black cloth, there is some evidence to suggest that the distribution of mourning accessories came to occupy a similar place with respect to the costs of funeral observances. For example, using a detailed narrative and financial account, Ralph Houlbrooke has discussed the burial of Colonel Edward Phelips of Montacute, in 1680. Of the total expenditure of just over eighty-eight pounds, more than half was due to the

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[122] *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, IV, 327.

[123] Mortimer, *Berkshire Probate Accounts*, pp. 168-69. In only a few of the surviving Yorkshire probate accounts (BIHR, Prob. Ex. 1607-1646) are funeral costs itemized, and these give details of food and drink, the ringers' charges, allowances to the poor, and so on. None of the accounts mention mourning cloth, clothing or accessories.

cost of the gloves, rings and scarves that were given.[124]

This move from heraldic to private funerals and the change from remembrance through mourning cloth to mourning accessory, did not occur in a doctrinal vacuum. Following the unleashing of Protestantism at the Reformation, the English religious landscape changed considerably, and in the seventeenth century particularly, the rise of godly Protestantism was immensely important. It would be reasonable to expect that such dramatic doctrinal shifts would be reflected in the rituals through which people expressed their grief. Certainly theologians had clear views of the subject of post-mortem remembrance. The mainstream Church of England position, although determined to cleanse the burial ritual of Popish contamination, had no objection to the paraphernalia of mourning. As John Whitgift wrote, such apparel was a matter of 'civility and order', and if worn in that spirit should be commended. Moreover it might have the laudable effect of reminding us of mortality; a wearable *aide memoire* of our own death.[125] By contrast, the official statement of the Elizabethan Puritan position, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (1572), spoke unfavourably of the custom of 'straunge mourning by chaunging theyr garments, which if it be not hipocritical, yet it is superstitious and heathnish'.[126] Thomas Cartwright advanced a further objection. If worn with a 'merry heart' mourning apparel was hypocritical, but if worn with sincerity the clothing of grief led to a treacherous excess of sentiment. 'Seeing therefore, if there be no sorrow, it is hypocritical to pretend it, and, if there be, it is very dangerous to provoke it [...] it appeareth that this use of mourning apparel were much better laid away than kept.'[127] Thomas Becon, in *The Sick Man's Salve* (1560), also repudiated the wearing of black for the souls of the faithful, since death was a joyful reunion with God, and 'they in heaven be clothed in white'.[128] In addition Puritans were anxious to diminish the scale of funerals and channel money towards charity and poor

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[124] Houlbrooke, 'Public and Private', p. 171; *Death, Religion, and the Family*, pp. 282-83.

[125] *The Works of John Whitgift*, ed. by John Ayre, 3 vols, Parker Society, 40 (Cambridge, 1851-53), III, 368-71.

[126] *Puritan Manifestoes*, ed. by W.H. Frere and C.E. Douglas (London, 1907), p. 28.

[127] *Whitgift*, p. 369.

[128] *Prayers and Other Pieces of Thomas Becon*, ed. by John Ayre, Parker Society, 12 (Cambridge, 1844), p. 121.

relief, 'particularly by providing gowns for the needy rather than for other mourners'.[129] Thus Becon's character, Epaphroditus, desires his family wear what garments they will at his burial, but that thirty poor men and women, and thirty children, be given 'seemly' gowns of a 'convenient colour'.[130]

The most extreme end of the spectrum was occupied by those like the Separatist Henry Barrow. He too, when describing 'these solemne mourners araid in black, many of them with hoodes, caps, crosses and other knackes', considered them to be idolatrous and full of hypocrisy. Christians, he said, should not 'mourne after such a superstitious and prophane maner, or to have their mourning only in their garmentes'. He accused wives and heirs of but wearing 'a black attire outwardly', and the preacher of being glad that he 'hath his mourning liverie and his hire'. Finally, grieving women, Barrow implied, were most struck with the fashionable aspects of their dress, and 'have their mourneries fitted at an haire breadth'.[131] These and other scornful sentiments, expressed in *A Brief Discoverie of the False Church* (1590), earned Barrow arraignment and execution.

The theory espoused by religious leaders, however, seems to have made very little difference to actual funeral observances. As Gittings contends, 'burial practices do not reflect religious changes as closely as might possibly be expected'. Instead she stresses the importance of secular, traditional rites in what she describes as a conservative ritual more marked by continuity than change.[132] In support of this she looks at funeral costs over the first half of the seventeenth century, pointing out that if a simple 'Puritan style' burial were being widely adopted, then one would see a decline in funeral spending. On the contrary, she finds that nowhere was funeral expenditure down, and in three of the four counties she surveyed average spending actually increased.[133] She concludes that the majority, even of those who might be called 'puritans', did not opt for simple plain burials. 'It would therefore seem reasonable to suggest that the supposed drastic simplification in burial rituals is a distortion fabricated by the polemicists and perpetuated by unwary

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[129] Greaves, *Society and Religion*, p. 717.

[130] *Becon*, p. 124.

[131] *Writings of Henry Barrow*, p. 460.

[132] Gittings, *Funerals in England*, pp. 96, 76.

[133] Gittings, *Funerals in England*, p. 86; Gittings, *Death, Burial*, p. 52.

historians.'[134] What was adopted, across the religious spectrum, was a rhetoric of decency without pomp. But such seemliness existed on a sliding scale, and usually signified a send-off that was suitable to the rank and social standing of the deceased.[135] It could, thus, be very fine indeed. In 1583 the Earl of Sussex, for example, desired a burial without pomp, but appropriate to his degree. He estimated that this would cost around £1500.[136]

Puritanism saw no marked diminution in the lavishness of burials then, or in the remembrance of the dead through mourning adornment. Thus divine Ralph Josselin recorded that in 1669 he preached at a funeral and received '20s. paire of gloves and blesse god'. David Stannard recounts the tale of Andrew Eliot, a New England cleric, who in this way amassed a collection of nearly 3000 pairs of gloves.[137] Josselin seemed to think it unusual enough to note at old Lady Honeywood's burial, that 'not a glove, ribband, scutcheon, wine, beare. bisquett given [...] but a little mourning to servants'.[138]

The Commonwealth period, during which one might expect Puritan observances to be at their most rigorous, continued to see a surprising regard for social pageantry. Even *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, the book of liturgical reforms introduced in 1644, maintained not to 'deny any civil respects or differences at the burial, suitable to the rank and condition of the party deceased whilst he was living'.[139] At the death of his son-in-law in 1651, Cromwell thus determined that Henry Ireton be magnificently buried; and this became the occasion of a power struggle waged through apparel.[140] The anecdote comes from Lucy Hutchinson's (1620- post-1675) memoirs, and shows John Hutchinson and Cromwell both manipulating the sartorial signals of grief in order to achieve their own

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[134] Gittings, *Funerals in England*, pp. 72, 93. David Cressy, in 'Death and the Social Order', takes a similar position. However, David Stannard in *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (New York, 1977) must be one of Gittings' 'unwary historians', for he asserts that Puritan funerals in England were stripped of all but the most basic ritual.

[135] See Cressy, 'Death and the Social Order', pp. 104-06; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, pp. 412-16; and Ralph Houlbrooke, 'The Age of Decency: 1660-1760', in *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Peter Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester, 1999), pp. 174-201.

[136] Greaves, *Society and Religion*, p. 709. The actual cost turned out to be £1629.

[137] Stannard, *Puritan Way of Death*, p. 112.

[138] *Diary of Ralph Josselin*, pp. 550, 635.

[139] Quoted in Gittings, *Death, Burial*, p. 55.

[140] The political uses of funerary pageantry in four further burials is discussed by Ian Gentles, 'Political Funerals during the English Revolution', in *London and the Civil War*, ed. by Stephen Porter (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 205-24.

political ambitions. Lucy averred that despite her husband being one of Ireton's nearest kin, Cromwell used the opportunity of Ireton's death to offer Hutchinson studied neglect and insult. Cromwell did this by passing Hutchinson over, 'and neither sent him mourning nor particular invitation to the funeral'. The Colonel had to content himself with the general notice given out by the Speaker in the House. Following this notice, 'many pitiful lords and other gentlemen parasites [...] put themselves into deep mourning', which was interpreted by Lucy as evidence of their flattery. By contrast Hutchinson, who had a relationship with the deceased to warrant such dress, 'put on a scarlet cloak, very richly laced, such as he usually wore'. Upon being asked why he, 'a kinsman, was in such a different colour', Hutchinson replied that because Cromwell had neglected to send him mourning he would not buy his own. To do so would be to fancy himself of greater value than clearly others did. This self-deprecation neatly showed up the 'pitiful lords and gentleman parasites'. Lucy's anecdote continued with Hutchinson declaring, however, that 'he was a true mourner in his heart for his cousin, whom he had ever loved, and therefore would go and take his place among his mourners'. Doing just that, he was seen among Ireton's intimates dressed in a style 'as different from mourning as he could make himself', at which 'the Alderman came to him making a great apology that they mistook and thought he was out of town'. Cromwell was 'piqued horribly' at the Colonel's sartorial attack, but for form's sake 'dissembled his sentiment at that time and joined in excusing the neglect'. According to Lucy, her husband was clear winner in this battle fought through textiles and subtext. Cromwell, she wrote, 'very well understood that the Colonel neither out of ignorance nor niggardliness came in that habit, but publically to reproach their neglects'.[141]

So we have evidence that despite political and religious upheavals over the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the importance of mourning dress remained constant. Certainly the form of memorial wear changed, moving from clothing vast numbers in styles distinguished by quantities of black cloth, to dressing of a few in full mourning and the many in a range of smaller accessories. But if the form evolved, its place within the economy of grief stayed unchanged. While arguing the transhistorical nature of emotions is always problematic, Houlbrooke suggests that 'there is no reason to suppose that the basic character of grief changed' over time. What did change was 'the means of its

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[141] Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. by N.H. Keeble (London, 1995), pp. 250-51.

expression'.[142] These means of expression included the wearable tokens and garments of mourning apparel, items of material culture that were key to the performance of loss and commemoration. But it remains, however, to ask why mourning apparel was so important. From Pepys's blackening of his shoe soles at his brother's demise, to the 'laggering' countesses in their sixteen yards of broad cloth at Queen Anne's, why did early modern culture have such a complex sartorial vocabulary for articulating death, and what did it say?[143]

Firstly, as we have already noted, mourning provided a visual commemoration of the deceased's social persona, extending his or her life through memory and sartorial witness. The gradations of mourning attire also acknowledged the different degrees of relationship within the community pertaining to the deceased and the grieving family. Ralph Houlbrooke feels that the seventeenth century tokens expressed overlapping hierarchies of status, kinship, friendship and regard even more effectively than the earlier custom of giving black cloth.[144] The provisions at Colonel Phelips's funeral show just how subtle the distinctions could be. Full mourning dress was restricted to certain family members, servants, and the pall bearers; twenty-five in total. Twenty-six rings were given to intimate equals, such as family or pall bearers. The scarves came in three different qualities. Eighteen people received the finest made of a silken fabric called 'love', including the bearers, the cleric and the man who penned the deceased's will. Nineteen, including the curate and other figures of relative importance were given scarves of broad tiffany, and twenty-five, among whom numbered servants of the family and a tenant, received narrow tiffany scarves. Five hatbands of love went to close relatives, and twenty-four hatbands of tiffany to those connected in a more distant way. Knots of ribbon were given to the female gentry and maid servants. Gloves, the most numerous of the tokens, also came in three grades. Eight shammy pairs went to kin and ninety-six of cordovan leather and kid were dispensed to friends and other relatives. Finally 118 of the coarsest grade, a sheep's leather, graced the hands of servants, tradesmen, and others.[145]

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[142] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family*, p.221; on early modern grief and mourning, pp. 220-54.

[143] *Diary*, V, 90, 18 March 1664.

[144] Houlbrooke, 'Public and Private', pp. 172-74.

[145] Ibid., p. 171.

The distribution of mourning cloth and accessories must also be seen within the context of early modern gift giving. The exchange of presents was of enormous significance in this period. Sustaining intimate relationships, gift giving also played a central and defining role in community interaction and the practices of government. In a society shaped by the networks of patronage and clientage, and where the personal merged with the official, gift exchange was a strongly cohesive force. The offering and accepting of gifts both created and fulfilled obligations, and in some senses bound giver and recipient together. The give and take of objects, and the objects themselves, thus gave material expression to relationships.[146] In a society well attuned to the responsibilities conferred by gifts, the distribution and wearing of black cloth and mourning garments thus sustained relationships between the deceased and his or her social circle, even beyond death.

The giving and receiving of mourning apparel also spread the loss of bereavement throughout the community. Rather than being carried exclusively by those whose pain was the greatest, sharing the clothing of grief also, to some extent, shared the burden of that grief. However, for those who continued in mourning garb after the funeral rites, their dress proclaimed their removal from normal society. Revealing their special status, it marked out a liminal time during which they were freed from the rules of polite social interaction, and given time to adjust to their loss. When Bulstrode Whitelocke's (1605-1675) first wife died 'he was so farre from any thoughts of woeing [wooing], that he went with his haire all overgrown on his face, so that he appeared as one 50 years old, his doublet was of blacke leather, his breeches of course haire stuffe, in mourning'. Meeting his future second wife he courted her, and to signal his return to normal social activities he 'cutt off his great beard, trimmed & better habited himselfe'. To his future wife his 'being trimmed and better clothed then before was not unpleasing, & and now his servants & neighbours tooke notice of his being a suitor to M[ist]r[i]s Willoughby'.[147]

Sometimes, as with Bulstrode Whitelocke, the sartorially defined limbo of grief which suspended the usual mores, duties and obligations of relationship, was only

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[146] On gift giving see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. by Ian Cunnison (New York, 1967); J.G. Carrier, *Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism Since 1700* (London, 1995); Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York, 1983); Klein, 'Elizabethan Gifts of Needlework'.

[147] *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, ed. by Ruth Spalding, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 13 (London, 1990), pp. 90, 92, 93. On the status, origins and importance of Whitelocke's diary, see Blair Worden, 'The "Diary" of Bulstrode Whitelocke', *English Historical Review*, 108 (1993), 122-34.

temporary. In other cases it lasted much longer. A whole year after the death of Pepys's mother, he recorded his wife's attractive appearance in an outfit bought just before her mother-in-law's demise, 'and so not worn till this day'.[148] Widows, particularly, might use their mourning weeds as a way of permanently redefining their status, signalling their removal to a position independent of further marital transactions. Thus, large portions of life in early modern England could be spent in visible connection to the dead. Many of the portraits that survive picture such a relationship as the sitter - though perhaps many years after the death commemorated - chose within the frame the perpetual identity of a mourner.

Finally, the donning of mourning apparel seems to have provided a way for individuals to be assured that they were responding appropriately and with due regard for their loss. The day that he learned of his mother's death, Pepys resolved 'to put myself and wife, and Barker and Jane, W Hewer and Tom, in mourning; and my two under-maids, to give them hoods and scarfs and gloves'. He went to his tailor to make initial arrangements for this household observance of grief, and this seemed to provide him with a certain consolation of having done what was fitting. For when he went to bed he wrote, 'my heart sad and afflicted, though my judgement at ease'.[149] The importance of fulfilling these demands of sartorial duty to the dead may explain Pepys's subsequent anger with his wife when she appeared two months later in second mourning. Most of her outfit was unexceptional: a 'black moyre waistcoat and short petticoat'. However, the quantities of silver lace on this latter garment must have appeared frivolous. The petticoat was 'laced with silver lace so basely that I could not endure to see her, and with laced lining, which is too soon'. Pepys was so 'horrid angry' that he stormed out to the office, and Elizabeth felt it necessary to send 'twice or thrice to me to direct her any way to dress her'.[150]

For those situated at the outer reaches of the ripple of grief, the observance of mourning had more to do with their connections to the living, than their relationship to the departed. The young Lady Clifford's record of Queen Anne's funeral clearly shows that for her much of the meaning of the ceremony was as a well-dressed society function. Indeed, as she noted herself, the actual burial took place in private later on, after the main - public - work of the funeral had been done:

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[148] *Diary*, IX, 134, 26 March 1668.

[149] *Diary*, VIII, 134, 27 March 1667.

[150] Ibid., p. 242, 29 May 1667.

> The 13th I was one of the Mourners at the Queen's Funeral. I attended the Corps from Somerset House to the Abbey at Westminster. My Lord was also one of the Earls that mourned. I went all the way hand in hand with my Lady *Lincoln* after the sermon, &, all the Ceremonies ended, my Lord, myself, & the Earl of Warwick & his Lady came home by barges. Being come home I went to my Sister Beauchamp to shew her my Mourning Attire. At the Funeral I met with my old Lady Pembroke & divers others of my Acquaintance with whom I had much talk. My Coz. Clifford was also a Mourner & bore the Banner after the Lords. When all the Company was gone & the Church Door shut up, the Dean of Westminster, the Prebends, Sir Edward Zouch, who was Knight Marshal, came up a private way & buried the Corps at the east end of Henry the 7th Chapel about 7 o'clock at night. There was 180 poor Women Mourners.[151]

In all cases, however, the clothing of grief was a mechanism for assuring the living that their response to the crisis of death was the right one. They could see themselves responding through dress, and this steered them through the shoals of mortality. Moreover, others could see their sartorial response, too. For it is clear that much of the performance of mourning was a public observance. Intimates, retinues, and even those 180 poor women hired for Anne of Denmark's funeral, had all to be seen to be in black in order for the thing to be properly done. This placement of grief within the public arena makes sense of Pepys's shoe soles, darkened so that when he knelt down even the soles of his feet displayed the correct sartorial message. It makes sense, too, of how in the midst of his grief for his mother, he could write that, 'I to church, and with my mourning, very handsome, and new periwig make a great show'.[152]

The utilization of clothing, then, enabled these men and women from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to manage the ultimate transition in the physical process of maturation: death. However, mortality also involved social transitions, and these too were eased by the adoption of particular garments. By dressing themselves in special ways early moderns fulfilled cultural, and personal, expectations of how a bereaved person looked and behaved. In effect they created a material form for grief and made themselves a persona

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[151] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, pp. 74-75.

[152] *Diary*, VIII, 138, 31 March 1667.

of loss. In the following chapter we explore this further by identifying other ways in which dress was used to create and present a desired identity. Like the clothing of grief, these will also be found to be public undertakings. The expression of personality, the communication of political and moral beliefs, the establishment of reputation and discredit: all this created a social identity, and occurred through dress and public witness.

Chapter 3

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

His Garments Helpe Him to bee Counted Such a One

When Cassio grieved for his lost reputation he was mistaken. Rather than being 'the immortal part' of himself, in practice early modern repute was staked very much in the material.[1] Social advance, for example, was held by many to be achieved through the medium of dress. Pepys, for one, talked mightily to Mr Creed 'of the convenience and necessity of a man's wearing good clothes'. The short term outlay was considerable, but outweighed by the long term advantage:

> and so to Sir W Turners and there bought me cloth, coloured for a suit and cloak, to line with plush the cloak - which will cost me money, but I find that I must go handsomely, whatever it costs me; and the charge will be made up in the fruits it brings.[2]

Phineas Pett, one of the family famous for ship building, felt similarly (Fig. 34). As a young man seeking to get on he 'was contented to take any pains to get something to apparel myself, which by God's blessing I performed before Easter next after, and that in very good fashion, always endeavouring to keep company with men of good rank far better than myself'.[3] As Sir Frederick Fregoso advised in *The Courtier* (1561), a man 'ought to determine with him selfe what he will appeare to be, and in such sort as he desireth to be esteemed, so to apparrel himselfe, and

Figure 34: Phineas Pett, *c.*1612, Unknown artist
Source: Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*

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[1] William Shakespeare, *Othello*, II, 3, 242-4.

[2] *Diary*, V, 269, 12 September 1664; V, 302, 21 October 1664.

[3] *The Autobiography of Phineas Pett*, ed. by E.G. Perrin, Navy Records Society, 51 (1918), p. 6.

make his garments helpe him to bee counted such a one'.[4]

The comments in personal narratives show how much the writers' sense of self, and their understanding of the identity of others, was governed by appearance. Frequently these passages are, for us at least, understated. We lack the contemporary understanding to make the comments entirely meaningful, but they are telling, if only in as much as showing a memory of clothing was worth recording. Lady Clifford littered her diary with such references that were clearly important for her: 'All the time I was at the Court I wore my Green Damask Gown embroidered without a Farthingale'.[5] Likewise Yorkshire Royalist Sir John Reresby's (1634-1689) memoirs contain similar comments, such as noting the 'night I went to a French play, putting on a good suit of cloaths which I gott made by the French embassador's tailer at Francfort'.[6]

Some writers were more loquacious and have explained more clearly the significance that their clothing held for them. For Lucy Hutchinson, her self-declared carelessness in dress expressed her indifference to certain social conventions and her stated preference for intellectual pursuits. She showed a 'negligence of her dress and habit and all womanish ornaments, giving herself wholly up to study and writing'. Lucy contrasted her own sartorial persona with that of her husband. Unlike her, John Hutchinson enjoyed dress and took pleasure in its devising and its display. He was:

> very neatly habited, for he wore good and rich clothes, and had variety of them, and had them well suited and every way answerable, in that little thing showing both good judgement and great generosity, he equally becoming them and they him, which he wore with such unaffectedness and such neatness as do not often meet in one.[7]

Clothes and their wear were, for Lucy, the index of her husband's gentility and inner superiority. Another female writer from the seventeenth century constructed an entirely different identity for herself. Instead of 'neglecting' her appearance as did Lucy Hutchinson, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, dwelt on it and was 'addicted'

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[4] Baldissare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), trans. by Sir Thomas Hoby (1561), Everyman Library (London, 1928), pp. 117-18.

[5] *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. by D.J.H. Clifford (Stroud, 1990), p. 64.

[6] *Memoirs of John Reresby*, ed. by Andrew Browning (Glasgow, 1936), p. 18.

[7] *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. by N.H. Keeble (London, 1995), pp. 51, 49-50.

to fashion:

> But my serious study could not be much, by reason I took great delight in attiring, fine dressing, and fashions, especially such fashions as I did invent myself, not taking that pleasure in such fashions as was invented by others: also I did dislike that any should follow my Fashions, for I always took delight in singularity, even in accoutrements of habits.[8]

In two different ways, then, both Margaret and Lucy established for themselves a position somewhat beyond the bounds of the usual. In the case of Margaret Cavendish, we have confirmation that others shared this vision of herself. Evelyn's diary entry for 18 April 1667 described how 'I went to make Court to the Duke & Dutchesse of *New-Castle* at their house at *Clarkenwell*'. He was received with 'extraordinary kindesse' which pleased him as much as 'the extraordinary fancifull habit, garb, & discourse of the Dutchesse'.[9] According to Pepys, Evelyn was much to be envied, for gossip was rife and many were eager to catch just a glimpse of her. Pepys was delighted to meet Lady Cavendish by chance:

> going home with her coaches and footmen all in velvet; herself (whom I never saw before) as I have heard her often described (for all the town-talk is nowadays of her extravagancies), with her velvet-cap, her hair about her ears, many black patches because of pimples about her mouth, naked necked, without anything about it, and a black juste-au-corps; she seemed to me a very comely woman - but I hope to see more of her on May-day.

Alas, on the occasion of the May Day drive in Hyde Park, Pepys and many others were destined to disappointment. There was 'a horrid dust and number of coaches, without pleasure or order. That which we and almost all went for was to see my Lady Newcastle; which we could not, she being fallowed and crowded upon by coaches all the way she went, that nobody could come near her'.[10]

This assessment of others on the basis on their clothing was naturally not confined

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[8] *The Lives of William Cavendishe, Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. by Mark Antony Lower (London, 1872), pp. 304, 303-4. On Margaret Cavendish's self-display as a writer, see Hero Chalmers, 'Dismantling the Myth of "Mad Madge": The Cultural Context of Margaret Cavendish's Authorial Self-Presentation', *Women's Writing*, 4 (1997), 323-39.

[9] *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by E.S. de Beer, 6 vols (Oxford, 1955), III, 478.

[10] *Diary*, VIII, 186, 26 April 1667; VIII,196, 1 May 1667.

to an extraordinary few. Participants in any social interaction made immediate judgements of the other party according to their dressed appearance. As theorist Joanne Finkelstein explains, 'styles of clothing signify fundamental statuses of gender, age and class which, in turn, provide a basis for social engagement [...] in many ways, appearance prescribes the manners of exchange fundamental to everyday sociation'.[11] Thus Royalist Lady Anne Halkett (1623-1699) was so agreeably surprised by the look of Lady Anne Campbell, that she revised her opinion of the barbarous north:

> For shee was very handsome, extreamely obleiging, and her behavier and drese was equall to any that I had seene in the court of England. This gave mee so good impresions of Scotland that I began to see it had beene much injured by those who represented itt under another caracter then what I found itt.[12]

Sir John Reresby found his appearance judged less favourably, and inferences drawn from it as to his personality and his politics. Returning to England in 1658 he discovered:

> The citizens and common people of London had then soe far inbibed the custome and manners of a Commonwealth that they could scarce endure the sight of a gentleman, soe that the common salutation to a man well dressed was 'French dog,' or the like. Walkeing one day in the street with my valet de chambre, who did wear a feather in his hatt, some workemen that were mending the street abused him and threw sand upon his cloaths, at which he drew his sword, thinkeing to follow the custome of France in the like cases. This made the rabble fall upon him and me, that had drawn too in his defence, till we gott shelter in a hous, not without injury to our bravery and some blowes to ourselves.[13]

Shortly before this Reresby had been involved in another situation where expectations of behaviour followed on an assessment of clothing. In this case, however, he found his expectations sadly awry. 'One day, walkeing over Pontneuf, and haveing a belt with large sylver buckles, a man well dressed, as he came after me, rubbed a little upon me as he passed by.' Discovering his belt cut and his valuable buckle gone Reresby suspected,

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[11] Joanne Finkelstein, *The Fashioned Self* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 150-51.

[12] *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. by John Loftis (Oxford, 1979), p. 51.

[13] *Memoirs of John Reresby*, pp. 21-22. The term 'bravery' refers to their fine apparel.

correctly, that it was the man just gone before, 'though his appearance and dress (for he had a sword and a good cloake) spoake him noe man to doe such an action'.[14]

As Pepys put it, he and his contemporaries were well aware of the extraordinary 'power of good clothes and dress' in determining social identity.[15] As such, apparel became a tool that could be utilized to produce a particular impression. For example, Evelyn described the trial of Lord Strafford. He pointed out that the 'Manegers, who were to produce & manege the Evidence & whole processe in the name of the *Commmons* of *England*', were deliberately not dressed in their legal capacity. They 'not appearing in their gownes as Lawyers, but in their cloakes & swords, as representing the Commons of *England*'.[16] Bulstrode Whitelocke chose to manipulate the sartorial code in order to make a similar point:

> He went to the Quarter Sessions att Oxford according to his engagement to the gentlemen, who putt him in the chayre though he was in coloured clothes, a sword by his side, & in a falling band, and unusuall garbe for Lawyers in those times, butt purposely used by Wh[itelocke] now to shew his sitting with them as a freeholder like themselves.

According to Whitelocke he was successful in creating an image of legal competence *and* gentility, for 'they perceived that one might speake as good sence in a falling band as in a ruffe', and they treated him 'both in Court & out of Court, with extraordinary respect & Civility'.[17]

Lucy Hutchinson was not so pleased with the success of Major General Harrison's strategy for manipulating his public persona through the medium of apparel. A Spanish ambassador was to have public audience in the House: a great occasion since he was to be the first foreign delegate to acknowledge the English republic. The day before the audience, Harrison admonished the 'handsomely clad' members and urged them 'to shine [...] in wisdom, piety, righteousness and justice, and not in gold and silver and worldly bravery, which did not become saints'. When the ambassadors came the next day, Harrison

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[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

[15] *Diary*, VII, 329, 18 October 1666.

[16] *Diary of John Evelyn*, IV, 227.

[17] *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, ed. by Ruth Spalding, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 13 (London, 1990), pp. 99-100.

urged, 'they should not set themselves out in gorgeous habits, which were unsuitable to holy professions'. Although Colonel Hutchinson 'was not convinced of any misbecoming bravery in the suit he wore that day, which was but of sad-coloured cloth trimmed with gold, and silver points and buttons', he and 'all the other gentlemen' duly appeared on the morrow 'in a plain black suit'. All the other gentlemen, that is, except Harrison himself. Harrison came that day 'in a scarlet coat and cloak, both laden with gold and silver lace, and the coat so covered with clinquant that scarcely could one discern the ground'. How easily must 'this glittering habit' have swum into sight, borne in the surrounding tide of sober black. It is impossible not to conclude with Lucy that 'his godly speeches, the day before were but made that he alone might appear in the eyes of strangers'.[18]

Alongside the armed encounters that scarred the political landscape of the 1630s and 1640s, a military motif also marked the contours of the male body. Mid-century portraits of elite masculinity characteristically represent their subject dressed in the accoutrements of combat: spurred riding boots, buff coat, and the identifying officers' sash.[19] The most valuable of these was the vastly tough and heavy leather coat, usually made of oxhide, used as protection in the field against weapons and weather. Participating powerfully in the construction of high status manhood, such garments were vital to reputation, and self-image (Fig. 35). Illustrating this significance is an event relating to his buff coat that Yorkshire gentleman John Hodgson (d. 1684), a Captain in the New Model Army, remembered with particular vividness. In 1662 Hodgson received a visit from a local official with a warrant to confiscate his arms, on the basis that Hodgson's parliamentary allegiance had rendered him suspicious to the post-Restoration regime. They took away over twenty pounds worth of 'fowling pieces, pistols, muskets, carbines and

Figure 35: Alexander Carew, *c.*1630, Unknown artist
Source: Ashelford, *Art of Dress*

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[18] *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, p. 243.

[19] Penelope Byrde, *The Male Image: Men's Fashion in England 1300-1970* (London, 1971), p. 68.

such like', and then demanded Hodgson's buff coat. He refused to relinquish it, and after heated argument the official left with the order that Hodgson must appear before the Deputy Lieutenant the following morning. Waiting on Sir John Armytage the next day, 'he threatened me, and said if I did not send the coat, for it was too good for me to keep'. Hodgson declined and the argument escalated. Sir John, 'growing into a fit, called me rebel and traitor, and said if I did not send the coat with all speed, he would send me where I would not like well'. Hodgson continued in staunch refusal eventually departing the room and, 'notwithstanding all the threatenings, did not send the coat'. The following day, however, Armytage retaliated and had delivered a letter - which Hodgson claims to quote from verbatim - again ordering that the buff coat be given up forthwith. Taking advantage of Hodgson's wife being then alone at home, the messenger hunted out the coat and took it away. Although wanting to reclaim it from Sir John, a third party advised that Hodgson settle for the four pounds financial recompense that Armytage was offering. However, so Hodgson recounted, Sir John avoided paying and he concluded that 'I had never satisfaction'. Most tellingly, of the buff coat Hodgson wrote that 'one of Sir John's bretheren wore it many years after'.

So, Hodgson took equitably the confiscation of his more expensive collection of arms, but utterly refused to part with his old buff coat. For all the protagonists in the conflict this garment became a symbol and focus of their political ideology, their aggression and dislike, and their struggle for power. Waged through the medium of the coat, the struggle was uncompromisingly gendered. Quintessentially an item of men's dress it was imbued with significations of violence, vigour and manly success. Within Hodgson's story his wife was a mere cipher - an invisible presence powerless to act in the matter of such a powerfully masculine vestment. Furthermore, at the end the coat was not simply confiscated but, like a trophy, appropriated by the victor for display on the backs of his brethren. Apparently on opposite sides of a political gulf, John Hodgson and Sir John Armytage were yet united in their understanding of a vestimentary code, and its importance in issues of reputation, identity, and esteem.[20]

These anecdotes about struggles for sartorial significance amongst Commonwealth

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[20] *Autobiography of Captain John Hodgson, of Coley Hall, near Halifax; His Conduct in the Civil Wars, and his troubles after the Restoration*, ed. by J. Horsfall Turner (Brighouse, 1882), pp. 57-8. For biographical details of Sir John Armytage see *The Lord Lieutenants and High Sheriffs of Yorkshire 1066-2000*, ed. by W. Mark Ormrod, researched by the Department of History, University of York (Barnsley, 2000), p. 145.

supporters should encourage us to reconsider the stereotype of plainly clad Puritanism. Firstly, however, we need to reconsider the term itself, for not defined by any particular belief or behaviour, 'puritan' has proved a remarkably elusive concept. Indeed, attempts to fix a meaning and a set of referent subjects 'have been going on for well over 400 years'.[21] For Patrick Collinson this quest is futile, and 'all attempts to distinguish this person, or that idea, or a certain practice or prejudice, as Puritan rather than otherwise are liable to fail'. Instead he posits Puritanism as being 'in the eye of the beholder': a fluid relationship formed by perceptions and self-perception.[22]

Clearly, handed down and inherited by us, the common apprehension - or stereotype - of plain, sober puritan apparel is one such perception. When used to stigmatize, it gave rise to images of 'the flatcapped, short cloked, russet clothed, and lether breeched broode of *Puritans*'.[23] Adopted by the godly themselves, it resulted in a self-image of moderate decorum. Lady Grace Mildmay (1552-1620), for one, espoused the view that women should 'array themselves in comely apparel with shamefastness and modesty, not with braided hair or gold or pearl or costly apparel'.[24] For Alice Thornton, her moderation in matters of dress was the sign of a life lived in Christian grace.[25] Along similar lines Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick (1625?-1678), considered her early delight in 'curious dressing and fine and rich clothes' as vain, idle and inconsiderate: as symptomatic, indeed, of 'being

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[21] Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, 'Introduction: The Puritan Ethos 1560-1700', in *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560-1700*, ed. by Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 1-31 (p. 1). This essay surveys recent attempts to adequately identify and define Puritanism. See also Nicholas Tyacke, 'Popular Puritan Mentality in Late Elizabethan England', in *The English Commonwealth 1547-1640*, ed. by Peter Clark, Alan Smith and Nicholas Tyacke (Leicester, 1979), pp. 77-92; Basil Hall, 'Puritanism: The Problem of Definition', *Studies in Church History*, 2 (1965), 283-96; and Glyn J.R. Parry, 'The Creation and Recreation of Puritanism', in *Protestants, Property, Puritans: Godly People Revisited. A Festschrift in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, new ser., 14, no. 1 (1996), 31-55.

[22] Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles, 1989), p. 15. See also 'The Theatre Constructs Puritanism', in *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London 1576-1649*, ed. by David L. Smith, Richard Strier and David Bevington (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157-69, where Collinson explores the influence of theatrical representations of Puritanism on actual lived identities.

[23] Matthew Sutcliffe, *An Answere to a Certaine Libel Svpplicatorie* (London, 1592), p. 134.

[24] *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620*, ed. by Linda Pollock (London, 1993), p. 45.

[25] *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*, Surtees Society, 62 (1875), p. 270.

stedfastly set against being a Puritan'.[26] This repudiation of sartorial extravagance is linked, though, to the pursuit of dress in the discursive realm. Here it supplied the godly with an area of imaginative plenty and a metaphorical language of self-description. Lady Brilliana Harley's (1600-1643) sartorial imagery concerned the signs of service. 'Be confident, he [God] is the beest Master amd will giue the beest waiges, and they weare the beest livery, the garment of holynes, a clotheing which neuer shall weare out, but is renwed euery day.'[27] Alice Thornton strove after 'the addorning of my spirritt and heart with all those Christian vertues'.[28] Grace Mildmay's mother, Lady Sharington, refused to give her daughter 'jewels and pearl and costly apparel' until 'I were furnished with virtue in my mind and decked inwardly'. Virtuously indeed, Grace shunned company least she 'be enticed and drawn away by some evil suggestions to stain mine unspotted garment'.[29] Images such as these abound in puritan writings. In them clothing was used as a metaphor for virtuous spirituality, and a way of imagining - and hence forming - the pious self.

A further and less readily remembered labelling of puritan behaviour concerned not excessive simplicity in dress, but excessive splendour. In October 1602 Dr Dove, the Dean of St Paul's, preached against 'the excessive pride and vanitie of women in apparraile'. From the pulpit he took this opportunity to single out the female followers of Puritan preacher, Stephen Egerton. According to the Dean they 'abounded in that superfluous vanity'.[30] Similarly Matthew Sutcliffe levelled against Puritans the charge of going in 'new fashiond & conceited apparel, & are all clad in *Satin*, & *veluet*, and costly apparel'.[31] John Woolton, Bishop of Exeter, also accused the godly, or those who were 'most precise', of having 'no scruple to tumble and wallow in all kind of prodigality, as in dainty fare, in

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[26] *Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick*, ed. by T. Clifton Croker, Percy Society, 22 (1848), pp. 4, 21.

[27] *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley*, ed. by Thomas Taylor Lewis, Camden Society, 58 (London, 1854), p. 16.

[28] *Autobiography of Alice Thornton*, p. 270.

[29] *Lady Grace Mildmay*, pp. 28, 34.

[30] *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple 1602-1603*, ed. by Robert Parker Sorlien (Hanover, NH, 1976), pp. 114-15.

[31] Sutcliffe, *An Answere to a Certaine Libel*, p. 108 [irregular pagination].

costly apparel, and sumptuous building'.[32] As far as matters of dress went, it seemed Puritans were damned if they did, and damned if they didn't.

For the godly, though, it was appropriate to be apparelled in a comely fashion for was not the body of God's creating? Similarly, it was necessary to dress suitably for one's station in life, for the social hierarchy was ordained by the Lord. From accounts we can see members of the Puritan elite dressing in a manner appropriate to, and unremarkable for, their station. Nathaniel Bacon, son of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas, and half-brother to the eminent Francis, was a leading figure among the Puritans of East Anglia. A full transcription of the bills from 1588 to 1594 sent in by the two tailors who chiefly supplied Nathaniel and his wife and daughters, gives us an accurate picture of the extent and quality of his family's wardrobe.[33] In 1590, for example, Peckover charged for making the women three gowns with fashionable 'Frenche verdeinggale Rolles' and 'verdeinggale sleves'. The next year he supplied them with garments made from fabrics such as crimson velvet, silk cypress, and different coloured satins, and trimmed with 'fine gould', 'stiffe purle gould', 'smothe purle gould', 'Rugget purle gould' and 'super fine gould oes'. It is a similar story for Nathaniel. In 1588 he had a cloak made. Along with the charge for sewing it up, the bill itemized gold lace to lay the same cloak, silk to set on the lace, and velvet for a cape for the garment. The cape had a hood which was faced in velvet, had gold buttons, and 'gould twyst to the lopes'.

Lady Harley advised her son to 'to be contented with plaine clothes', yet she also - and without, one imagines, any sense of contradiction - approved of the silk chamlet chosen for his suit, and recommended him to wear Spanish leather shoes and silk stockings.[34] For the problem in judging dress lay, as so often, in the matter of view point. Although it may seem clear, the boundary between simplicity and finery is both relative and revisable, and is dependant solely upon who is judging whom. This results in a situation where the vestimentary text is read, and re-read, through the eyes of class, religious belief, political allegiance, gender and moral standpoint. Such contestation of meaning is amply illustrated in opinions concerning the length of men's hair.

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[32] John Woolton, *The Christian Manual*, Parker Society, 41 (Cambridge, 1851), p. 90. These are examples given by Greaves, *Society and Religion*, pp. 505.

[33] The transcription is included in Elizabeth Stern, 'Peckover and Gallyard, Two Sixteenth-Century Norfolk Tailors', *Costume*, 15 (1981), 13-23.

[34] *Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley*, pp. 16, 50.

Stereotypically, Parliamentary supporters of the 1640s were held to have theirs close cropped - a feature of appearance that earned them the opprobrious nickname 'roundheads'.[35] For Lucy Hutchinson, however, this was an affected custom adopted only by Puritan zealots. She complained that 'roundhead' was very ill applied to her husband, who had 'a very fine thickset head of hair, kept it clean and handsome without any affectation, so that it was a great ornament to him'. But she went on to record that 'the godly of those days' would 'not allow him to be religious because his hair was not in their cut'.[36] The divisions amongst the Puritan camp were not restricted to John Hutchinson and his colleagues. Lady Harley's husband Sir Robert, Sir Francis Barrington, and Sir John Cutts all wore their hair cut short. Yet, J.T. Cliffe warns us, they 'cannot be regarded as typical', for others such as Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston, Sir Arthur Hesilrige and Sir William Armyne wore theirs long.[37] Certainly, the most extreme among the Puritans thought long hair on men ungodly, as witnessed by William Prynne's 1628 text *The Unloveliness of Love-Lockes*. With his usual vitriolic energy and repetitive outpourings, Prynne used the opportunity to warn 'the Christian Reader' against the 'Womanish, Sinfull, and Vnmanly, Crispnig [*sic*], Curling, Frouncing, Powdring, and nourishing of their Lockes, and Hairie excrements'.[38] However, to complicate the matter still further, Archbishop Laud - on the very opposite end of the religious spectrum to Prynne - concurred with him that long hair was unseemly and immoral, and as Chancellor of the university of Oxford tried to enforce this view.[39]

Puritan John Winthrop, in writing to Margaret Tyndal his future wife, seemed aware of the complex judgements surrounding appearance. He warned her of the 'matter of apparrell fashions and other circumstances', for it was the subject of vain minds, and savoured too much of the flesh. However, he went on to 'confesse that there be some ornamentes which for virgins, and knightes daughters etc may be comly and tollerable'.

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[35] For the origins of the term, see Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990, pp. 143-47.

[36] *Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, pp. 86-87.

[37] J.T. Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry* (London, 1984), p. 57.

[38] William Prynne, *The Vnlouelinesse of Love-Lockes* (London, 1628), sig. A3^{v}. Almost twenty years later Prynne again capitalized on the emotive pull of such issues in his political tract *A Gagge for Long-Hair'd Rattle-Heads who revile all civill Round-heads* (London, 1646).

[39] Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry*, p. 57.

Wisely, given the ever-shifting boundary between dressed piety and pride, he omitted to determine just what these might be. Instead he closed the subject of Margaret's bridal raiment by promising that 'I will medle in no particulars', and left the choice to her 'owne wisdome, and godlinesse'.[40]

It seems, then, that all we can say about Puritans is that they dressed - like anyone else - as they individually thought befitted their beliefs and personal circumstances. As John Winthrop advised, they made the choice of their clothing according to their 'owne wisdome, and godlinesse'. However, the notion of Puritans as a distinct group was given apparent coherence by perceptions of either mean, or lavish dressing. Although, like all stereotypes both ideas dissolve upon closer scrutiny, they do indicate the power that clothing had to affect judgements made of both others, and of the self.[41] While the significations of clothing differed depending upon who was reading the ensemble - godly, immoral, plain, or luxurious - yet still that clothing was vital to people's ideas of identity.

Sir John Oglander's wife, daughter of staunch puritan Sir George More, solved the ambivalence of apparel in a manner presumably satisfactory to herself. According to her husband, she 'never wore a silk gown but for her credit when she went abroad, and never to please herself'.[42] Her example alerts us to the importance of *ways* of wearing. When the appropriateness of any given garment was uncertain, how it was worn, and when, could matter a great deal. One area in which this was particularly crucial was hat honour. Simply put, this was the code that declared men were to remove their headwear for superiors, and to remain covered in the presence of those of a lesser status. Between these two actions though, lay a range of possible responses through which the hat wearer could articulate his attitudes to authority, his relationship with others, and his assessment of his own status. 'Aggression, defiance, salutation, respect, submission, entreaty, and emotion were all

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[40] *Winthrop Papers Volume 1 1498-1628* (Massachusetts, 1929), p. 227.

[41] For discussions of the way appearances were use to identify and lambast other political and religious groups, see Tamsyn Williams, ' "Magnetic Figures": Polemical Prints of the English Revolution', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. by Nigel Llewellyn and Lucy Gent (London, 1990), pp. 86-110; and David Cressy, 'The Adamites Exposed: Naked Radicals in the English Revolution', *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 251-80.

[42] *A Royalist's Notebook: The Commonplace Book of Sir John Oglander of Nunwell*, ed. by Francis Bamford (London, 1936), p. 241.

readily conveyed by adroit handling.'[43] According to his wife, the Duke of Newcastle's use of headgear was typical of his unassuming dignity, but it also indicates the kind of *noblesse oblige* born of unquestioned privilege. 'He hates Pride and loves Humility; is civil to Strangers, kind to his Acquaintance, and respectful to all persons, according to their Quality; He never regards Place, except it be for Ceremony: To the meanest person he'll put off his Hat.'[44]

Clearly this communication worked because all parties shared an understanding of what was meant. This enabled the Governor of Holstein to identify Bulstrode Whitelocke, despite him being plainly dressed. 'Rantzow knew not w[hi]ch was the Am[bassadou]r [,] he being in plain Grey gown of English Bayes till (as he said) he observed Wh[itelocke] w[i]th his hatt on, & a great many brave fellowes standing by him uncovered'.[45] It also allowed a rather enterprising thief the opportunity to enrich himself. The teller is John Chamberlain, who wrote to both Dudley Carleton and Ralph Winwood of an affront lately done the Spanish ambassador. A trickster, riding near the ambassador's coach saluted him, and 'the Spaniard putting of his hat in requitall, had yt snatcht from him and lost yt with a rich hat-band and jewell'.[46] Despite Chamberlain's rather gleeful tone in recounting this bit of gossip, hat honour could be an extremely serious matter. The notebooks of John Finet, Master of Ceremonies to Charles I, have numerous references to the way dignitaries negotiated the hierarchies of court and personal standing through the doffing, or otherwise, of their headgear. Lapses of etiquette were remarked and censured, and skilful hat handling gained diplomatic prestige and, literally, eased international relations.

The case of Sir James Spence's audience with Charles amply illustrates this complicated subtext. Sir James, although originally a Scot, was visiting court in the March of 1629 in the capacity of Swedish ambassador. As a private individual from Britain he obviously owed deference to Charles, but as the representative of a foreign monarch certain privilege and honour were his due. Having gained consent to an audience with both the

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[43] Penelope Corfield, 'Dress for Deference and Dissent: Hats and the Decline of Hat Honour', *Costume*, 23 (1989), 64-79 (p. 68).

[44] *Lives of Duke and Duchess of Newcastle*, p. 189.

[45] *Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, p. 380.

[46] *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), I, 375, 376-77. Letter to Sir Ralph Winwood, 10 August 1612 and Letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, 11 August 1612.

King and the Queen, at his request Sir James was also granted a private meeting with Charles. Before this occurred, however, the Earl of Carlisle smoothed the diplomatic path by suggesting to Charles that 'thoughe the ambassador were a Scottish man borne and his natural subiect, he should receyve all the honours and respects given any other ambassador, and be permitted to cover in his presence'. Accordingly Sir James, when brought before the King, 'giving no more humble respectes than an other ambassador would have, he was putting on his hat, after the fyrst invitation, but after that often putting it off and on agayne, as he was invited to it by his majesty'. Sir James then went to Henrietta Maria before whom he remained bare headed, for the good manners owed to a woman did not diminish, he said, the dignity of his royal employer. But this painstaking etiquette also earned Sir James political mileage, for he was compared to less skilled diplomats, and his conduct found more gracious. In Finet's words:

> Her majesty invited him to cover but he refused it as being (he sayd after to me) a marck of parity, which to a woman (no sovereigne) he might dispense with, wythout prejudice to the quality of the kyng that sent him, and with more praise (sayd others) to himselfe than some Danish and Dutch ambassadors had bene formerly iudged to have merited, in covering at the very instant of theyr access to her majesty without scarce staying, as if doubting to be offered, the honour of her invitation.

But the test of Spence's *politesse* was not yet over. From the Queen he was conducted to the requested private audience with Charles. At this, and all subsequent private meetings, Sir James 'never offered, nor was invited to cover'. For out of 'publick notice' and his ambassadorial role, he was in duty bound to 'pay all dewe respectes to his naturall soverayne. These were his owne and not improper reasons'. Spence's sensitivity and skill in diplomatic affairs - of which his keen appreciation of hat honour was an example - earned him flattering notice and a successful career. As Finet mused:

> One thyng was remarkable and observed by many of this ambassadours imployment, more than of any before, that having bene sent wyth ample commission from the Kyng here to the kyng of Sweden, his then master as having longed served him in his warrs as generall of the Scottish and English forces, he was trusted and returned wyth the lyke full commission by the same

kyng to the kyng of England his naturall souverayne.[47]

Thirty years later the implications of hat honour were also to occupy Samuel Pepys, though he handled its intricacies less adroitly than did Sir James. With reference to his inferiors, lapses of respect filled him with irritation. In October 1661 he reported himself 'much offended in mind at a proud trick my man Will: hath got, to keep his hatt on in the house'. On another occasion, when meeting with a group of naval captains, he was ill-pleased to find that one 'among twenty that stood bare, stood with his hat on, a proud saucy young man'. His relationships with superiors could also cause Pepys unease. Walking along the Mall one evening, he drew near to the Duke of York. It being fairly dark Pepys and his companion continued on their way without stopping. One of James's footmen came running after them, however, and looked in their faces as if to see who they were. Pepys racked his brain to see if he had inadvertently given offense. 'What his meaning is I know not, but was fearful that I might not go far enough with my hat off, though methinks that should not be it; besides, there was others covered nearer then myself was, but only it was my fear.'[48]

The offense that a refusal to observe hat honour could give, can not be overestimated. To witness this we must turn to the Quakers, who resolutely declined to pay this sartorial respect to persons whom, although socially superior, were equal before God. In his journal for 1649 George Fox described how 'when the Lord sent me forth into the world, he forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low'. This, he wrote, inflamed people of all sorts; 'because I could not put off my hat to them, it sent them all into a rage'. From here it was a short step to persecution:

> Oh, the blows, punchings, beatings, and imprisonments that we underwent for not putting off our hats to men! For that soon tried all men's patience and sobriety, what it was. Some had their hats violently plucked off and thrown away [...] The bad language and evil usage we received on this account are hard to be expressed, besides the danger we were sometimes in of losing our

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[47] *Ceremonies of Charles I: The Note Books of John Finet 1628-1641*, ed. by Albert J. Loomie (New York, 1987), pp. 57-58.

[48] *Diary*, II, 199, 20 October 1661; VI, 339, 26 December 1665; IV, 252-53, 27 July 1663.

lives for this matter.[49]

Fox does not exaggerate here, for hat defiance, by refusing to acknowledge hierarchies of authority, signalled a fundamental challenge to the political status quo.[50] Although the regime at that time was Puritan, it still upheld temporal inequality as rigorously as any monarchy; and thus the State Papers are littered with references to Quakers punished for, among other things, refusal to doff their hats. For example, three Quakers arriving in Plymouth appeared before the mayor 'with their hats on'. Two 'stood stiff in their folly and were sent to prison'. In another case a Quaker petition drew attention to the plight of Thomas Curtis and John Martindale who were, it was claimed, taken without justification as vagrants. They were 'brought up at the assize before Chief Justice Nicholas, and no charge was brought against them; yet because they would not take off their hats, he fined them 40*l.* each, and sent them back to prison, where they remain'.[51]

George Fox's stalwart refusal of hat honour, John Hodgson's attachment to his buff coat, and the Duchess of Newcastle's delight in singular fashions all helped them establish a particular persona, and place within society. Their identity, in other words, was at least partly performed through dress. In this performance the garment was vitally significant: its style, richness, colour and fabric. However, the manner of its wearing was also charged with meaning. So, in *The Winter's Tale* the disguised Autolycus is judged by the Clown to be a great courtier. Then the more percipient Old Shepard replies, 'His garments are rich, but he wears them not handsomely'.[52] Importantly, this notion of character as being performed through the medium and manipulation of clothing implies the existence of an audience. Dressed identity was validated by being observed, even if only by the wearer; and it was played out in the public realm. It is to the ramifications of this that we will now turn.

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[49] *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. by John L. Nickalls (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 36-37. For further Quaker writings on the subject, see William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown:, Or Several Sober Reasons against Hat-Honour* (London, 1669), esp. pp. 7-15.

[50] Adrian Davies, *The Quakers in English Society 1655-1725* (Oxford, 2000), points out that while the Quaker refusal to remove hats earned them 'a reputation as social radicals' (p. 57), the use of the hat as a symbol of dissent pre-dated the emergence of the Friends (pp. 133-35).

[51] *CSPD 1655*, p. 183, 25 May 1655; *CSPD 1657-8*, p. 156, 10 November 1657.

[52] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, IV, 4, 744-45.

To See and be Seen

'After I had furnished myself with clothes fit to walk abroad in, I went to wait on the Cardinal'.[53] As Sir George Courthop (1616-1685) shows us, much of the sartorial project was a public undertaking. Although he had arrived in the city of Rome, he could not arrive in society, or 'walk abroad', until he had fashioned a suitably dressed persona. Without it he could not enter the common domain: clothing enabled social recognition. When John Verney married Elizabeth Palmer in 1680, there was a sense in which their union only achieved validity when publically proclaimed by their dress. They planned the ceremony itself to be almost secretive. John wrote to his father on the morning of the wedding that 'we designe to be Married [...] very privately in our old clothes, none will be at it but her father, mother, brother & Aunt'. Indeed they aimed not to tell anyone, 'keeping the news within our own doors from Thursday to Saturday'. Then, however, 'wee shall owne it publiquely by our clothes in Chelsey Church'.[54]

We have seen that Anne Clifford went to her sister to show off her mourning attire. Samuel Pepys, too, made a habit of trying out new clothes on friends and family before venturing into the wider public view. His colleague, John Creed, was sometimes the first audience for new purchases, as when Pepys 'put on my riding-cloth suit, only for him to see how it is, and I think it will do very well'. 'And after dinner', Pepys noted in another diary entry:

> he and I upstairs, and I showed him my velvet cloak and other things of clothes that I have lately bought, which he likes very well; and I took his opinion as to some things of clothes which I purpose to wear, being resolved to go a little handsomer then I have hitherto.[55]

Sometimes the approbation of intimates was not forthcoming, and Pepys responded with a corresponding caution. On Sunday 11 June 1665, he received a new suit of 'Colour'd

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[53] 'The Memoirs of George Courthop', in *The Camden Miscellany 11*, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 13 (London, 1907), p. 135.

[54] Frances Parthenope Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, 4 vols (London, 1892-1899), IV, 249-50. On the social networks of which this wedding formed a part, see Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), esp. pp. 69-70.

[55] *Diary*, III, 116, 21 June 1662; IV, 357, 31 October 1663. Pepys's sharing of sartorial aspirations with male friends is an interesting view into the rites and practices of men's sociability. For a background to this see Karl E. Westhauser, 'Friendship and Family in Early Modern England: The Sociability of Adam Eyre and Samuel Pepys', *Journal of Social History*, 27 (1994), 517-36.

Farrinden', different from the black clothing he habitually wore. He tried it on but evidently his wife did not like it, which put both her and the new suit out of favour. Pepys consoled himself with the thought that 'I think it is only my not being used to wear Colours, which makes it look a little unusual upon me'. Thus comforted, after his midday meal he ventured 'out of doors a little to show forsooth my new suit, and back again'. Gaining confidence after this public trial, the next day he wore 'my yesterday's new suit to the Duke of Albemarle'. By the end of the following month he recorded his satisfaction in his public appearance 'in my new coloured-silk suit and coat, trimmed with gold buttons and gold broad lace round my hands, very rich and fine'.[56]

The same sampling of public reaction is revealed in the gradual process by which Pepys brought himself, over the months of 1663, to wear a wig. Tired of the trouble it took to keep his hair clean, on 9 May Pepys started by trying on a number of wigs at his barber's. He left undecided, and worried about 'the trouble I forsee will be in wearing them'. His indecision continued into August, when he again mentioned the matter to his barber. At Pepys's prompting Jervas showed him a hair piece, yet still Pepys had 'no great desire or resolution yet to wear one. And so I put it off a while'. He put it off, in fact, until October, when he realized that a perruque was necessary to be modish. Having taken this decision, accompanied by his sartorial confidant Mr Creed, he sallied forth 'to one or two Periwegg shops about the Temple [...] and there I think I shall fit myself on one very handsomely made'. Four days later he took his wife to the wig-maker's to inspect his purchase, 'and she likes it very well'. Having gained the approval of intimates, Pepys then contemplated trying his new look out on a wider public, and 'will begin next week, God willing'. Accordingly, on the 3 November, he took the dramatic but necessary step for wig-wearing, of cutting off his own hair. Then trying on his wig 'I had caused all my maids to look upon it and they conclude it to become me, though Jane was mightily troubled for my parting with my own hair and so was Besse'. So, we might suspect, was Pepys. Nevertheless, the next day he ventured to the office, 'showing myself to Sir W. Batten and Sir J. Mennes'. With relief he recorded that there was 'no great matter made of my periwig, as I was afeared there would'. The final trial came on the following Sunday when he attended service. 'I found that my coming in a perriwigg did not prove so strange to the world as I was afeared it would, for I thought that all the church would presently have cast

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[56] *Diary*, VI, 125, 11-12 June 1665; VI, 175, 31 July 1665.

their eye all upon me - but I found no such thing.'[57] This success - unremarking public acceptance - launched Pepys onto a path of enjoyable and proud wig wearing, as testified by subsequent remarks made through the diaries. Unlike Malvolio he wished to avoid singularity, and be notable for his dress, and not notorious.

This propensity of clothing to connect people through interactive display and observation, opens up the sense of early modern communities as being visually constituted.[58] That is, community revolved around the question of who saw whom. As seeing, in this case, carried connotations of social recognition, there was no necessary reciprocity to visual engagement. As Pepys has told us, the Duchess of Newcastle was 'fallowed and crowded upon' by those eager to catch a glimpse. Yet she, in turn, would have acknowledged very few of them. Pepys himself was continually using visual encounters to establish and cement the community in which he wished to participate. As Ian Archer has written:

> While travelling through the city streets membership of the elite was signalled by dress and to some extent by mode of transport. Pepys would regularly 'bump into' friends and acquaintances in city streets: '*seeing* my neighbour Mr. Knightly walk alone from the Change... I did invite him home with me', 'so back homewards, and *seeing* Mr Spong, took him up'.[59]

As Pepys's fortunes rose, so too did the level of his social vision, finding former companions but 'sorry company'.[60] The exclusivity of 'seeing' depended, therefore, on a range of mediating factors, such as status, aspiration, patronage, kinship, gender, and ties of obligation.

Personal narratives, then, reveal concern about who was to see one's dressed image. They also disclose a sensitivity about where the visual encounter was to take place. As the

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[57] *Diary*, IV, 130, 9 May 1663; IV, 290, 29 August 1663; IV, 343, 21 October 1663; IV, 350, 26 October 1663; IV, 357, 30 October 1663; IV, 358, 31 October 1663; IV, 362, 3 November 1663; IV, 363, 4 November 1663; IV, 369, 8 November 1663.

[58] The debate that surrounds the concept of community is an involved and continuing one. For a recent contribution to, and an historiographical survey of the area, see Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2000).

[59] Ian W. Archer, 'Social Networks in Restoration London: the Evidence from Samuel Pepys's Diary', in *Communities in Early Modern England*, ed. by Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington, (Manchester, 2000), pp. 76-94 (p. 80). The quotations are from *Diary*, VII, 31, 31 January 1666 and VII, 218-19, 25 July 1666. The emphasis is mine.

[60] Archer, 'Social Networks', p. 83.

tale of Pepys's wig indicates, among the many possible sites of social engagement one of the most potent was at church. It was in this place that the whole community - or a Pepys put it, 'the world' - gathered and observed one another. The overt order of the day may have been worship, but equally important was the social agenda underlying liturgy, sermon and prayer. We are familiar with the way issues of status emerged in pew disputes, of how state edicts found promulgation via the pulpit, and how community relationships were ordered through church rituals.[61] Less obvious to us was the use of the church gathering as a venue for displaying dress. Eyes may have been lowered in prayer, but undoubtedly were also cast in sidelong glances of appraisal, as the congregation assessed one another's garments.

In addition to recording the bare fact of her attendance at church, Lady Clifford described her appearance there, with intimations as to the public effect. 'The 28th I went to Church in my rich Night Gown & Petticoat, both my women waiting upon me in their liveries'.[62] The disarmingly frank disclosures made by Pepys included many descriptions of his Sunday routine.[63] On the Lord's Day he invariably rose, dressed in his finest clothes, and went to church. 'Up, and put on my new stuff-suit with shoulder-belt, according to the new fashion, and the bands of my vest and tunic laced with silk lace of the colour of my suit. And so, very handsome, to church, where a dull sermon of a stranger.'[64] Matters of the flesh were of a more pressing nature here than possible benefits to the spirit. As well as showing himself, Pepys took careful note of others. He weighed up the visual presentation, and, comparing it with his own, was able to make a judgement. It was a complex equation

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[61] On issues of status in pew allocation see, David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 28-33; Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 111-12; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 137-44; Martin Ingram, 'From Reformation to Toleration: Popular Religious Cultures in England, 1540-1690', in *Popular Culture in England, c.1500-1850*, ed. by Tim Harris (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 95-123 (pp. 112-14); Robert Tittler, 'Political Culture and the Built Environment of the English Country Town, c.1540-1620', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. by Hoak, pp. 133-56 (pp. 142-45). On the general importance of the church to the community, see Beat A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c. 1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996).

[62] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, p. 65.

[63] All too often the apparent immediacy and candid nature of Pepys's diaries lure scholars into treating these sources as transparent recordings of the 'truth'. For an essay which helpfully reminds us that the diaries are consciously crafted texts, and subject to all the opacity that this entails, see Mark S. Dawson, 'Histories and Texts: Refiguring the Diary of Samuel Pepys', *Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), 407-31.

[64] *Diary*, IX, 201-2, 17 May 1668.

in which modishness, cost and social standing all played their part:

> *Lords day.* This morning I put on my best black cloth-suit trimmed with Scarlett ribbon, very neat, with my cloak lined with Velvett and a new Beaver, which altogether is very noble, with my black silk knit canons I bought a month ago.
>
> I to church alone, my wife not going; and there I find my Lady Batten in a velvet gowne, which vexed me that she should be in it before my wife, or that I am able to put her into one; but what cannot be, cannot be. However, when I came home I told my wife of it; and to see my weakness, I could on the sudden have found my heart to have offered her one, but second thoughts put it by; and endeed, it would undo me to think of doing as Sir W. Batten and his Lady do, who hath a good estate besides his office.[65]

Satire and moralizing were voluble on the subject of the Sunday service as fashion parade. It is a key theme of the first chapter in particular, of the misogynous text, *The Batchelar's Banquet* (1603). The newly-wed bride wishes to be dressed beautifully, and although they can't afford it, manipulates her husband into giving her a new outfit. The main thrust of her argument is that she does not wish the fine clothing for herself. Indeed, she would be content with mean apparel, only when she goes to ecclesiastical ceremonies - churchings, christenings and weddings - she is ashamed of what people say. Social credit, she impresses on her husband, is established through sartorial credit. The gullible and tender-hearted husband gives in to his manipulative and competitive wife, and buys her a new gown:

> And whereas before she vaunted, that she could find in / her heart to kéepe alwayes within doores, she will bée sure now euery good day to goe abroad [...] that all may see her brauery, and how well she doth become it; to which cause she also comes euery Sunday dayly to the Church, that there shée may sée and be séene, which her husband thinkes she doth of méere deuotion.[66]

Naturally, in this moralizing tale, the couple end in penury and unhappiness. Naturally also, the proper solemnity of religious ceremony is seen to be sabotaged by female pride in the

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[65] *Diary*, IV, 400, 29 November 1663.

[66] *The Batchelar's Banquet: or A Banquet for Batchelars: Wherein is prepared sundry daintie dishes to furnish their Table, curiously drest, and seriously serued*, in *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart, 5 vols (New York, 1963), I, 164. The text has been mis-attributed to Dekker.

But it was not just the *wearing* of garments that was given meaning by its place within the public domain. Before mass production and anonymous off-the-peg retailing, apparel was ordered, made and purchased with widespread knowledge and participation. The extent to which this might be the case is demonstrated by the account books of Giles Moore (1617-1697). Rector of Horsted Keynes in Sussex, Moore left an exceptionally detailed record of his income and expenses, tabulated according to commodity. It is quickly apparent that the work of acquiring and maintaining his and his family's clothing was spread amongst his acquaintances. So, on 12 October 1664, Moore paid 'young Frank West' four shillings for 'a paire of Trowses which Hee bought for Mee at London'. On the 11 November he similarly reimbursed John Pelham, Richard Harland's journeyman, 'in behalfe of his master for 4 dozen of Buttons which his master bought at Lewis'. Later on in November he recorded the sums paid to individually named merchants for cloth and trimmings, and also the sum of one shilling 'Giv'n M^{r} Hull's Eldest Son for going along with mee & helpe buy them'.[67] Cloth was sewn into garments by local artisans, such as the tailor, Richard Harland. But the making of linen goods and small clothes was dispersed more widely throughout the community. Generally these items passed through the hands of women. For example, under his 1666 expenditure on holland, Moore recorded that he bought an ell from Goodwife Cranfield, which he then paid Goodwife Harland - the tailor's wife - to make into four handkerchiefs. He also paid Elizabeth Pocock for first making him three bands and three pairs of cuffs, and then later gave her six shillings 'for buying, making & sending Mee 12 paire of socks'.[68] Bearing in mind the necessity of husbanding valuable cloth resources, we also find many of Moore's entries relate to the repair and mending of apparel. In August 1667 Richard Harland sent Moore his bill 'For foo-ting & mending 4 paire of stockings 1^{s} 4^{d} halfe a Q^{ter} of silke 3^{d} [...] the 4 paire of stockings coast the footing 3^{s} 6^{d} which was unreasonable.' So unreasonable, in fact, that Moore took his custom elsewhere. Entries for the next year include paying an Edward Waters and 'wateres Maid' for footing his stockings, 'mending cloaths', 'mending my Cassack' and 'mending my cloake & Gloves'.[69]

Since the nineteenth century we have used the metaphor 'washing dirty linen in

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[67] *The Journal of Giles Moore*, ed. by Ruth Bird, Sussex Record Society, 68 (1971), p. 119.

[68] *Journal of Giles Moore*, p. 48.

[69] *Journal of Giles Moore*, pp. 122-23.

public'.[70] In early modern England, when the neighbouring Widow James was paid for whiting linen, the phrase bore only a literal interpretation.[71] The state of affairs where artisans, servants, widows and housewives had intimate knowledge of the age, value and condition of others' garments argues the existence of a particular sense of self that is different from our own. It is a self defined less by independence, and more by relationship and connection.[72] Existing not in anonymous isolation - the existential freedom 'invented' by modernity - but within a community which overlooks, the individual was metaphorically knitted into relationship just as surely as his or her stockings were physically knitted into shape.

Portraits also existed within, and contributed to, the sense of public viewing. They were expressly designed to be displayed and were hung, most generally, in public rooms 'for all to see'.[73] Strolling through the long gallery - that contemporary architectural achievement so suited to picture display - the living figure experienced a series of encounters with the painted. Down from the walls the full-length images of the familial, famous and royal, looked out at those viewers looking at them.[74] While catering for the intimate gaze, the genre of miniature painting so popular at the time was designed, nevertheless, for display. Although, as Nicholas Hilliard described, they were 'to be weewed [viewed] of nesesity in hand neare vnto the eye', yet still miniatures assumed 'a function in the public sphere'.[75] Portraits were a means of sending a particular image of

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[70] *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* dates the phrase from 1815.

[71] *Journal of Giles Moore*, p. 27.

[72] Using the material culture of mirrors, Deborah Shuger comes to a similar conclusion. She finds the early modern sense of self to have been relational in its secular life - with identity existing in respect to family and other societal structures; and also in its spiritual life - with identity existing in relation to God, see Deborah Shuger, 'The "I" of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind', in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 21-41.

[73] Patricia Fumerton, '"Secret" Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets', *Representations*, 15 (1986), 57-97 (p. 60).

[74] The display of portraits in the long gallery and the composition of picture collections is discussed by Roy Strong in *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London, 1969), pp. 43-50. Portraits were also painted as half and three-quarter length studies, though many that we know today have been cut down from full length originals.

[75] Nicholas Hilliard, *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, ed. by R.K.R. Thornton and T.G.S. Cain (Ashington, 1981), p. 86. John Peacock, 'The Politics of Portraiture', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 199-228 (p. 211). Patricia Fumerton has addressed the ambiguity of the private/public nature of miniatures in 'Secret Arts'.

self out into the world.[76] Unlike real life originals these paintings could not themselves see but, to borrow for the author of *The Batchelar's Banquet*, they could *be* seen.

The work pioneered by Sir Roy Strong has established our understanding of these images as painted statements of lineage and status. Noting the brilliant surface colours and comparatively flat and static rendition of the subject matter, Strong has dubbed these works English icons. This is not to say that portraits bore no resemblance to their sitters in life. On the contrary, memoirs not infrequently refer to the representational quality of a painting, and it was this value as a memorial that overcame Henry Newcome's protestant objections to image making:

> My cousin Mosely did most turn me to it, by a word that fell from him, - that his father had died when he was an infant, and there was no picture of him, and how much he would give that he knew what sort of a man his father was; and so for his children's sake, he would have his picture drawn. And on this account I admitted it.[77]

However, individuality of facial detail and inscription was set within a conventionalized body pattern and background. English Renaissance portraits were not unique studies of personality, but images that enhanced the assertion of social role and commemorated a life's achievements.

This was done, in great part, through the portrayal of costume. Even the most schematic and conventionalized of faces are set above clothing rendered in tiny detail from minute observation. 'The clothes, that is, provide a specificity that the faces do not.'[78] The most famous examples of this are found in the many portraits of Elizabeth. If she sat at all - and it was a rare occurrence - she modelled only for the face and the outline of the pose. For the rest of the sittings the clothes were either worn by a stand-in, or propped up in the studio. More usually the artist painted the Queen's clothes from life, but merely copied her face pattern from another source.[79] Perhaps this concentration of painterly attention on

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[76] On the political uses of portraits and their role in representing power and status, see Peacock, 'The Politics of Portraiture'.

[77] *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A.*, ed. by Richard Parkinson, 2 vols, Chetham Society, 26, 27 (1852), I, 97.

[78] Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 38.

[79] Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds, 1988), p. 15.

garments was common practice for other sitters, considering Edward Norgate's advice from about 1650 that, 'for the apparrell, Linnen, Jewells, pearle and such like, you are to lay them before you in the same posture as your designe is, and when you are alone, you may take your owne time to finish them, with as much neatnes and perfection as you please, or can'.[80]

The sitter's choice of clothing for this perpetual and enduring image of self was clearly anything but casual.[81] It was a considered presentation, taking into account the viewer's likely 'reading' of an outfit. Edward Herbert, Lord Cherbury (1583-1648) was proud of his status and appearance as a Knight of the Bath, 'wherevpon I could tell how much my person was commended by the Lords and Ladyes that come to see the Solemnitye'. To celebrate his achievement of the 'Robes of Crimson Taffita', he had himself painted in them, and the painting hung in his study for his frequent view.[82] Unlike Herbert, however, Pepys felt that he did not own clothing suitable for the image he wished to present in his portrait, so he hired an outfit. 'Thence home and eat one mouthful, and so to Hales's and there sat till almost quite dark upon working my gowne, which I hired to be drawn [in] it - an Indian gown, and I do see all the reason to expect a most excellent picture of it.' (Fig. 36)[83] Lady Sussex was also most particular about her painted image. While Pepys had remedied the deficiency in his wardrobe by hiring an outfit, she desired Van Dyke to embellish

Figure 36: Samuel Pepys, 1666, John Hales
Source: Ashelford, *Art of Dress*

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[80] Edward Norgate, *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*, ed. by Martin Hardie (Oxford, 1919), p. 38.

[81] Stallybrass and Jones explore the process by which the painterly subject was constructed by the choice and portrayal of apparel and accessories, see *Renaissance Clothing*, pp. 34-58.

[82] *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Written by Himself*, ed. by J.M. Shuttleworth (London, 1976), pp. 37, 38. Stallybrass and Jones contend that commissioning a portrait to commemorate a particular event or achievement was common, arguing that 'many Renaissance portraits were supplements to rites of passage', *Renaissance Clothing*, p. 34.

[83] *Diary*, VII, 85, 30 March 1666.

her existing apparel so that it appeared finer than in reality. To Sir Edmund Verney, who in 1639 had arranged for her to sit for the artist, she wrote: 'Put S[r] Vandyke in remembrance to do my pictuer wel. I have sene sables with the clasp of them set with dimons - if thos that i am pictuerde in wher don so i think it would look very wel in the pictuer'. Later on, when the finished portrait was copied by a lesser artist, she continued to be aware of how subsequent viewers might interpret it. 'I am glade you have got hom my pictuer, but i doubt he hath [...] made it [...] to rich in ihuels [jewels] i am suer, but it tis no great mater for another age to thinke me richer then i was.'[84]

Portraits were a way of maximizing personal visibility through a replication of image. Visibility could also be increased by expanding that image, so that it encompassed other people. Those so subsumed were marked out by badge, colour and cloth as participants in the display of status: they wore livery. Anne Clifford was very aware that her appearance at church had added cachet due to the attendance of her two liveried followers. From minor gentry stock, Nicholas Assheton recorded in his journal his part in a similar interaction from the point of view of the liveried. His neighbour, Sir Richard Houghton, was due to be entertaining the King in the summer of 1617. Assheton wrote on 1 June that Sir Richard had urged both him and his brother-in-law, 'to do him such fav[r], countenance, grace, curtesie, as to weare his clothe, and attend him at Houghton, at ye kings comming in August'. Assheton consented. Three months later, on 11 August, he wrote: 'My brother Sherborne his taylor brought him a suit of app[ar]all, and us two others, and a live[r]y cloake, from Sir Ric. Houghton, that we should attend him at the King's coming, rather for his grace and reput[n] shoeing his neibors love, then anie exacting of mean service'. His final comment on the affair is dated 13 August. 'We that were in Sir Ric[s] liv[y]', he remarked, 'had nothing to do but riding upp and downe.' However, this was enough. Wearing Sir Richard's colours their job was to advertise his standing, doing so simply by showing themselves and being seen.[85] According to Paul Hentzner (d. 1623), a German travelling as companion to a young nobleman, this display was typically English. For the English, Hentzner wrote, are 'lovers of show; followed wherever they go by whole troops of

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[84] *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, I, 257, 258.

[85] *The Journal of Nicholas Assheton*, ed. by F.R. Raines, Chetham Society, 14 (1848), pp. 7-8, 32, 34.

servants, who wear their masters' arms in silver fastened to their left arms'.[86]

Pepys was not followed by a troop, but he still wished to apparel his modest retinue so as to add to his dignity. On the 16 March 1662 he reported his plans for a new livery, and a week later the designs were delivered. 'This morning was brought me my boyes fine livery, which is very handsome, and I do think to keepe black and gold lace upon gray, being the colour of my armes, for ever.' Two months later the apparelling of his servant continued to add to his own feeling of consequence:

> And after dinner [...] I walked with my wife to my Brother Toms, our boy waiting on us with his sword, which this day he begins to wear to out-do Sir W. Pens boy, who this day, and Sir W. Batten['s] too, begin to wear new liverys. But I do take mine to be the neatest of them all.[87]

Bulstrode Whitelocke also reported the pleasing spectacle of being surrounded by well-dressed subservients. 'This being the day for Wh[itelockes] last audience, his followers were in their rich liveries, his gent[lemen] in their richest habits, himselfe in plain English cloth with buttons of rubyes.'[88] The difference in Whitelocke's case, is that all sumptuousness of apparel - ruby buttons aside - has been displaced on to his followers. The social theorist Thorstein Veblen called this variation on conspicuous display, vicarious consumption. Except for the presence of discreet markers, such as Bulstrode's jewelled buttons, the signs of status are effaced from the person in whom it actually resides. Instead the burden of display is carried by dependents. Veblen and later commentators agree that the nineteenth century saw the most striking expression of vicarious consumption. The garments that gentlemen wore were sober and restrained, while their wives and servants dressed in outrageous style: crinolines, bustles and tight-lacing for women, the invention of 'upstairs downstairs' regalia for serving staff. [89]

In the sixteenth century there was resistance to what may have been the beginnings

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[86] 'Extracts form Paul Hentzner's Travels in England, 1598', in *England as Seen by Foreigners*, ed. by William Benchley Rye (London, 1865), p. 10.

[87] *Diary*, III, 47, 16 March 1662; III, 50, 23 March 1662; III, 77, 4 May 1662. Despite Pepys's protestations that he would keep this livery for ever, time showed that even servants' garb was subject to the vicissitudes of fashion. In November 1668 he ordered another design of green lined with red, 'and it likes me well enough' (IX, 372).

[88] *Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, p. 361.

[89] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1899), pp. 126-28; Quentin Bell, *On Human Finery: The Classic Study of Fashion Through the Ages*, rev. edn (London, 1976), pp. 138-54.

of this displacement of 'excess'. I. M., the anonymous author of *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving-Men*, bemoaned the unfitting spectacle of the fine clothes not being worn upon the person of the fine gentleman. 'I met (not long since)', he complained:

> a Gentleman in Fleetestreete, whoes lyuing is better woorth then .2000. Markes yeerely, attended with onely one Man, whose apparrell was much better then his Maisters, though he was a Justice of Peace in his Countrey. But I speake not this, eyther to discommend the Gentlemans homely habite, or commende to Seruingman in his excesse: but the miserie of that minde, that regarded more Coyne then his credite.

He goes on to consider the person of mean estate who swaggers in fine dress with many followers. It was impossible, he concluded, to 'discerne this difference, and know the one from the other, the Gentleman from the Swashbuckler, by his apparrel, attendants, and companie'.[90] Sixty years later, as we have seen, Bulstrode Whitelocke read a similar sartorial arrangement as meaning the complete opposite. When he walked abroad to establish credit, 'it was w[i]th state[,] his liveryes rich, his gentlemen richly habited, onely himselfe in a plain grey cloth suit, with the jewell of the Q[ueen] of Swedens picture att his breast'. Indeed, in doing so Whitelocke was identifying himself with the Queen whose portrait miniature he wore. For in the Swedish royal company all were in 'excellent order, & rich in clothes, only the Q[ueen] & P[rince] were plain in their habits'.[91] Perhaps, then, along with the slow democratization of high status dress - I. M.'s swashbuckling upstarts possessed of excessive temerity and an excessive wardrobe - there grew up a corresponding elite appreciation of the vicarious demonstration of spectacular behaviour. Possibly I. M.'s disapproval was at the beginnings of a more modern re-coding of sartorial display, which would culminate in notions of vulgarity, restraint and discretion.[92]

Wealth, lineage and achievement - whether real or alleged - were asserted materially

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[90] I. M., *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving-Men 1598*, ed. by A.V. Judges, Shakespeare Association Facsimiles, 3 (1931), sigs D3^{r}-D4^{v}, D4^{v}.

[91] *Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, pp. 374, 363.

[92] This move away from conspicuous splendour in men's dress is often, following Flügel, called the great masculine renunciation. For an essay which explores the eighteenth-century construction of a politically powerful masculinity based on the 'new' values of sartorial restraint, see David Kuchta, 'The Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing and English Masculinity, 1688-1832', in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 54-78.

for a public audience. Less desirable status was also witnessed publically, and also seen through the medium of dress. Early modern mechanisms for punishment illustrate this clearly. Whether judicial, ecclesiastical or popular, imposed discipline was public and shaming, and routinely used clothing in creative ways to add to the culprit's physical and emotional discomfort. For the church courts this can most easily be seen in its 'characteristic penalty' of penance.[93] Typically the guilty were ordered to perform acts of contrition dressed in a white sheet and carrying a white rod. Usually undertaken in church, penance might also be done in other public places, as was the case with the five who 'dyd penance with shetts a-bowt them' at Paul's Cross on 4 November 1554.[94] Although penitential wear was standard - and F.G. Emmison notes that churchwardens usually kept sheets for the purpose - the ecclesiastical judges might use their discretion when deciding on penalties.[95] To increase the humiliation, for example, the offender might be ordered also to appear bareheaded, barelegged, stripped of their outer clothing or, in the case of women, with their hair loose. On the other hand, to mitigate the punishment the penitential shroud might be foregone altogether, as happened to John Munt and Grace Hubbard. Found guilty in 1600 of sexual practice before marriage, they were allowed to 'acknowledge their fault at the time of solemnization of matrimony in their ordinary apparel'.[96]

Clothing also figured amongst punitive strategies in the secular world.[97] For example, on 9 July 1561, Henry Machyn (1498?-1563?) tells us that a pillory was set up for an apprentice. Having stolen money from his master, the apprentice had bought himself 'nuw aparell, nuw shurtt, dobelet and hose, hat, purse, gyrdyll, dager, and butes [boots], spurs, butt-hose, and a skarffe'. Incorporated into the judgement, these new garments 'dyd hang

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[93] Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p. 3. On penance in general, see ibid. pp. 53-54; Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People During the English Reformation 1520-1570* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 46-47; F.G. Emmison, *Elizabethan Life II: Morals and the Church Courts*, (Chelmsford, 1973), pp. 281-91.

[94] *The Diary of Henry Machyn: Citizen of London, 1550-1563*, ed. by John Gough Nichols, Camden Society, 42 (London, 1847), p. 73.

[95] Emmison, *Morals and the Church Courts*, p. 282. Flora Johnston has written a fascinating article detailing the appearance and history of a penitential, or 'sackcloth' gown in the collection of the Museum of Scotland. It belonged to the parish of West Calder, a small community in West Lothian, and appears to date from 1646, see Flora Johnston, 'Jonet Gothskirk and the "Gown of Repentance" ', *Costume*, 33 (1999), 89-94.

[96] Emmison, *Morals and the Church Courts*, p. 282.

[97] On the punitory repertoire of the courts in early modern England, see J.A. Sharpe, *Judicial Punishment in England* (London, 1990), pp. 18-49.

up on the pelere'.[98] More often though, other supplementary symbols were used to advertise guilt and underscore humiliation.[99] Thus the woman punished on the 22 March 1560/1 for selling fish unlawfully, rode about 'with a garland a-pone her hed hangyng with strynges of the small fysse'.[100] On other occasions there was a more literal labelling of misdemeanours, the culprit wearing a textual description of the crime, rather than the metaphorical signal. The couple paraded through town on the 5 November 1557 suffered just this. The man was 'on horsebake, ys fase toward the horses tail, and a wrytyng on ys hed; and he had a fryse gown, [and] ys wyff leydyng the horse, and a paper on her h[ead, for] horwdom'.[101] The most extreme form of this 'textual' punishment was branding. For those like the maid 'bornyd in the brow' for poisoning, the sign of guilt was to be displayed for the rest of the culprit's life.[102] While these objects and textual descriptions were not apparel in the strict sense of the word, they were 'worn' by the offender. By altering the gestalt of normal appearance, they invited ridicule and social humiliation.

The ultimate disgrace, however, involved the removal of clothing. Machyn recorded two occasions where hanging the offender was not punishment enough, the extreme nature of the offense requiring some further display of disapprobation. On the 10 January 1559/60, William North and his man were hung for killing Master Wynborne outside the west door of St Paul's. When they were cut down in the afternoon, the hangman carried them into St Gregory's churchyard, where a grave had been dug ready. 'And so they wher strypyd of all, and tumbelyd nakyd in-to the grayff'. The other incident involved two men - John Boneard and Gregory, a Spaniard - who were arraigned for attempted robbery. During the case

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[98] *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 262.

[99] The use of symbols in popular shaming practices such as charivari was also common, see Martin Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 105 (1984), 79-113, esp. pp. 86-90; Martin Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes in Early Modern England', in *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Barry Reay (London, 1985), pp. 166-97, esp. pp. 168-69, 177-78; and Martin Ingram, 'Juridical Folklore in England Illustrated by Rough Music', in *Communities and Courts in Britain 1150-1900*, ed. by Christopher Brooks and Michael Lobban (London, 1997), pp. 61-82, esp. p. 62. Also on popular shaming punishments see Natalie Zemon Davis on charivaris in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 97-123; and D.E. Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. by Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 117-36.

[100] *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 253.

[101] Ibid., p. 156.

[102] Ibid., pp. 236.

Gregory pulled out a knife, and before the judges, stabbed a witness giving evidence against him. Boneard was burned in the hand, but Gregory's contempt of authority fared much worse. A gibbet was set up immediately, his hand was struck off and nailed to it, and 'contenent he was hangyd up [...] and Gregory hangyed all nyght nakyd'.[103]

Although embedded within the ultimate retribution of capital punishment, the juridical stripping of clothes from the condemned corpse was not trivial, or accidental. As J.A. Sharpe has written, 'public executions were carried out in a context of ceremony and ritual', and as with all ceremonies and rituals, every gesture had significance.[104] These divestitures were morally loaded, and onlookers had no doubt as to the contempt they signalled. To understand this fully we need to look back at the contemporary importance of a decent burial. Those of the very lowest status - children, the poor, and even the destitute - were extended the respect of a correct and Christian interment. Only to those who had forfeited their place in the community, only to excommunicates, suicides and some executed felons, was this denied.[105]

The punishments meted out in early modern England indicate that the inappropriate use of clothing - including nakedness - was a sign of stigma or social dysfunction. In the case of crime, this sartorial isolation was imposed on the wearer. Evidence suggests, however, that in other situations individuals might willingly engage in unacceptable dress behaviour as a way of expressing a social or mental position in some way marginal, or on the edge. We have seen how after the death of his first wife Bulstrode Whitelocke communicated his distracted state by neglecting his person, and later signalled the transformation back to his social, rational self by returning to accepted styles of dress. The characterization of melancholy, apparelled carelessly in black, loose and dishevelled, and with a wide-brimmed hat pulled low, also points to the centrality of clothing to perceptions of social fitness.[106] Interestingly, Robert Burton's advice for its cure included the reversal

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[103] Ibid., pp. 223, 122. Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane point out the potency of medieval punishments that inflicted a state of undress, see *Dress in the Middle Ages*,, pp. 102-03.

[104] J.A. Sharpe, ' "Last Dying Speeches": Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 107 (1985), 144-67 (p. 146).

[105] Clare Gittings, *Funerals in England 1580-1640: The Evidence of Probate Accounts* (unpublished B. Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), pp. 129-34.

[106] See Strong, *English Icon*, pp. 21, 35-37, 352-54; Bridget Gellert Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in the Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London, 1971), p. 22; Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge,

of sartorial negligence, indicating the agency of dress and that clothing could not only be a symptom, but also a *cause*, of mental unease. Let the melancholic be, 'neatly dressed, washed and combed, according to his ability at least, in cleane sweet linnen, spruce, handsome, decent, and good apparell, for nothing sooner dejects a man then want, squalor and nastinesse, foule, or old cloathes out of fashion'.[107] For Alice Thornton's distant forbear Christopher Wandsford, no such return to the normal was possible. He was a lunatic, 'fallinge for the moste parte once a day into a fitt of frensie or lunacie, in which fitt he used to teare his clothes frome his backe and burne theime if he were suffred'.[108] Whether Nehemiah Poole was mentally disturbed or merely socially disruptive is unclear, but on 21 January 1659 he was 'indicted for coming to the church in his shirt; and by the justices committed to the house of correction for three months'. As Henry Newcome then added, 'It is a mercy that restraint is laid on such persons as these are'.[109]

Michael MacDonald, in his moving study of mental health in early modern England, looks briefly at this relationship between clothing and madness. He concludes that the mentally disturbed were often reported as either disrobing or destroying their garments; acts that were irrational, wasteful and 'socially self-defacing'. Those who deliberately spoiled their own apparel 'repudiated their social pretensions'. Indeed, MacDonald writes, it was a kind 'of social suicide'.[110] It is no accident that at the point at which Lear and Edgar lose their capacity for rational speech, they also lose their clothing.[111] Naked they are less than human, a sentiment echoed in real life by Joachim Hane. A German employed by the Interregnum government as an engineer and a spy, Hane recorded in his journal the occasion when his clothing had been stolen. To cover himself he was forced to put on the thieves' discarded garments 'of thin canvis ragged and torne'. Hane described this episode in terms if a fundamental shift of social status. 'I was now become a worme and no man,

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1981), p. 130.

[107] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1989-1994), II, 238.

[108] *Autobiography of Alice Thornton*, p. 319.

[109] *Autobiography of Henry Newcome*, II, 299-300. The shirt was an undergarment generally only to be seen at the decorative edging of neck and wrist, or glimpsed through slashes in outer garments.

[110] *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 130, 131.

[111] John Broadbent, 'The Image of God, or Two Yards of Skin', in *The Body as a Medium of Expression*, ed. by Jonathan Benthall and Ted Polhemus (London, 1975), pp. 303-26 (pp. 303-04).

a scorne to all that saw me.'[112]

A Very Good Fancy in Making Good Clothes

Joachim Hane and his contemporaries read the inappropriate use of apparel as a typology of a dysfunctional personality. But in fact they understood all aspects of social role through the medium of clothing worn within the community view. Success, power, wealth, guilt and madness were all focused in the public eye and carried in some way on the person. However, the fundamental relationship that clothing and identity have in every society, was rendered more binding in early modern England by methods of production. Before off-the-peg retailing all new garments were ordered by and made for, a particular individual. He or she had power, not merely in the selection of a garment as today, but over its design and appearance. In a world of unique garments, responsibility for dressed image was located much more personally. So important was the consumer to the process of constructing apparel, that to Lucy Hutchinson's mind her husband bore the active and creative part, rather than the tailor. The Colonel was 'genteel in his habit, and had a very good fancy in making good clothes'.[113]

Bearing in mind how much appearance was a self creation, it is easier to understand how dress became such a potent tool in the courtly struggle for advancement. Robert Carey (1560-1639), eventually created the Earl of Monmouth, believed he owed part of his preferment to his skill in dressing. The establishment of Charles I's household as Duke of York led to inevitable jostling for precedence amongst the courtiers eager to secure a position. Carey apparently found favour with the Lord Chamberlain, whom he reported as speaking to the King in the following terms. Robert Carey:

> carried himself so as every honest man was glad of his company. He ever spent with the best, and wore as good clothes as any, and he exceeded in making choice of what he wore to be handsome and comely [...] sure I am, there is none about the Duke that knows how to furnish him with clothes and apparel so well as he; and therefore in my opinion, he is the fittest man to be Master of the Robes.

As Carey wrote, 'this cast the scales', and with days 'I was sworn chief Gentleman of the

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[112] *The Journal of Joachim Hane*, ed. by C.H. Firth (Oxford, 1896), pp. 40, 41.

[113] *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, p. 19.

Bedchamber, and Master of the Robes'.[114] Similarly, it was not just James I's penchant for handsome young men that led Lord Thomas Howard to advise Sir John Harington in 1611, that if he were to succeed at court he must:

> be well trimmed; get a new jerkin well borderd, and not too short; the King saith, he liketh a flowing garment; be sure it be not all of one sort, but diversly colourd, the collar falling somewhat down, and your ruff well stiffend and bushy. We have lately had many gallants who failed in their suits, for want of due observance of these matters.[115]

In such a climate no wonder a man might 'lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet'.[116]

This more active involvement of the individual with the creation of his or her clothing, required a complex and largely forgotten expertise. Without the coercive influence of mass production and ubiquitous fashion images, the early modern consumer had to make a whole range of choices concerning the colour, fabric, cut, style, cost and fit of each garment. In order to do so successfully, he or she needed a particular set of skills and body of information: observations about fashionable dress, a certain knowledge of garment construction, the ability to imagine the finished item, and the vocabulary with which to communicate ideas to the tailor. Furthermore, material was often obtained separately by the customer and given to the tailor for making up. In these cases a knowledge of textile properties was essential, along with the ability to judge its quality and to estimate the amount each garment would need. Lady Judith Barrington's instructions to her steward regarding a stepson's outfit, illustrate the financial and aesthetic judgements that such an ordinary undertaking required:

> Heer is a patern of a good colerd cloth and lace for a suite for Jack Barrington. My French taylor last week tooke heer measure of him, and I hope it will fitt him better then Pickering did; worss hee cannot. 3 laces in a seame I heer now is the best fashion, except we would bestow all lace, which wee will not, and besides that is to costly. Thear needs no buttons on the armes or back for this

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[114] *The Memoirs of Robert Carey*, ed. by F.H. Mares (Oxford, 1972), pp. 70-71, 72.

[115] John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae: Being a Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers*, ed. by Thomas Park, 2 vols (London, 1804), I, 391-92.

[116] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, 3, 17-18.

winter, and the sooner he hath itt the better, for you know his need.[117]

This dress awareness was not limited to women like Lady Judith. It was equally - if not more so - the province of men. At a time when women from the middling and upper sort led relatively privatized lives with limited access to commercial and public spheres, men were involved in making sartorial provision for themselves, and their households. As such, expertise in clothing and textiles was somewhat differently gendered than now, when cultural norms declare fabrics and fashion to be a largely female concern.

In the Calley household we can see seventeenth-century gentlemen making such informed decisions. After the Calleys' friend and former steward Richard Harvey left their service in 1635, they continued to use him as agent for their London business. In this capacity Sir William frequently sent to Harvey with detailed instructions regarding textiles. The letters both reveal the writer's specialist knowledge, and imply a similar expertise on the part of the recipient. On Calley's part this may have been gained in the course of his former profession as a cloth merchant. For Richard Harvey such ability is harder to account for, except as the knowledge appropriate to a well-informed seventeenth-century consumer. Thus, on 14 November 1640 Sir William wrote:

I wish these percelles of Linen bought & sent downe soe conveniently as you may viz:

63 elles of flaxen cloath or fine Rhoane Canvas that is somewhat more then ell broade of aboute ii s. per ell, but not aboue ii s.-vi d. per ell at the vttermoste.

54 elles of Rhoane Canvas of full yeard broade of xvi d. or xviii d. per ell at the vttermoste.

54 elles of strong Canvas yeard broade at xi d. or xii d. per ell at the moste.

20 elles of shippers holland of iii s.-iiii d., or iii s.-xi d. per ell at the moste.

Sixe dozen of holland diaper Napkins of 13 to the dozen & aboute xviii d. or xix d. per Napkin, & nine elles of diaper of the same sort for tabling which is to bee three tymes the breadth of the Napkins.

40 or 50 elles of strong narrow Slesia cloath of 6d. or 7d. per ell or there aboutes.[118]

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[117] *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632*, ed. by Arthur Searle, Camden 4th ser., 28 (London, 1983), p. 252.

[118] PRO, SP16/471/67.

Three weeks later Calley's requested cloth had arrived, and he reported to Harvey on the extent to which the fabrics met with his approval. The detail of his letter shows how active and critical was his role as a textile consumer.

> To tell you how I like the cloath I will as neare as I can; The holland diaper both Napkins & Tabling hold out measure, but I could haue beene content the Napkins had beene all in one, and not two pieces, otherwise I like the price and cloath well enough and soe I doe all the rest for the prices, but especially the flaxen cloath had it beene in one piece or in more pieces soe they had fallen out fitte for the vse I intended them and with all not wanted measure, but in stead of 63 elles I wrote for, you mention but 62½ elles to bee sent, and of this there wantes; for in the greater piece there is just 52½ elles a fitte patterne, and the other piece is but 7½ elles at most which should haue beene 10½ elles and then it had beene right, but I would haue you forbeare questioning the draper for his want of measure till you heare from mee againe, because I will cause it to bee measured over once more though it was measured at first as soone as it was opened. [119]

However the amount does seems to have been correct, for Sir William wrote again two weeks later. 'I caused my sonne to take exact notice of the measure of the flaxen Cloath, & now finde the same to bee 62½ elles as much as you sent it for, though there wants half an ell of what I wrote for.'[120] Note that it was his son to whom Sir William deputed authority in this matter of textiles, and not his wife or daughter-in-law.

Sir Willliam's orders to Harvey also concerned clothes for himself, his household, and his adult son (also William). He was as knowledgeable and as particular in matters of dress as of cloth, and once again his agent needed similar judgement:

> Richard harvey
>
> My last sent you was of the 21th [*sic*] instant which was written late in the night with somwhat distempered mynde, whereby I fow[nd] I did not expresse my selfe in divers perticulers soe plainely as had beene fitte; for whereas I wrote you to buy 12 yardes of broade black perpetuana to make 3 suites for servantes I did not then expresse what you shoulde doe with yt; which 12

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[119] PRO, SP16/473/56.

[120] PRO, SP16/473/91.

yardes I woulde have sent downe vnmade up, for they that shall have yt, shall make yt vp heere, as themselves liste; William Calleys new doublett coller was made an ynche to highe, and 2 ynches to narrow, and therefore the taylor shoulde have sent downe some peeces of the same cloth as allsoe of my coate & suite, to have amended any thinge which might have beene amisse, which [procure] him to doe [per] the nexte [...] Allsoe I desire you to buy mee a verry sad embrodered tawney girdle to suite with my last clothes you sent mee [...]

> For my mourninge cloth suite, I desire the doublett shoulde bee lyned with scarlett bayes, and the hose with white fustian; Allsoe I pray you buy a payre of very good silke stockins for William Calley, to bee of suche cullor as may matche with his laste suite, as you and the taylor shall thinke fitte.[121]

At the same time as this the capable Richard Harvey was also corresponding with William Calley junior, again with regard to Calley's own clothing, and also that of his dependents:

> Concerning your patternes of kersey I cannot except against them unless it bee they are hardly fine, but rather then I wilbe vnfurnished that shalbe noe hinderance; for my self I choose the patterne soe written xxxv as much as will make mee a large Coate & suite to which I would have pointes at the knees, buttons for both, & silke sowing & stithing, and of leather linings a payre ready made; I purpose to have these thinges made vp in the Cuntrey, Mr Davison shall make fine worke when I have it; one thing I had almost forgotten which was as much white thread shagge as will line my doublett; and this for my self is all; For my three sonnes as much of this patterne or of some neare the Colour of this [Span]ish cloath if you can gett any as will make them doubletts and breeches; which these appurtenances, Lambe skinnes for the linings of theyre breeches fustian for theyre doubletts, silke sowing & stitching and buttons at least fower dozen more then will serve turne; and this for them is all; now that you may knowe how much kersey will serve them; aboute Christmas last I made them & my self suites of one Cloath of sixe [ ] broade, wherein there was just 8½ yeards whereby Mr Davison can easily guesse what will now bee sufficient for them, allowing a yeard over & above for theyre growth since that tyme, for I had rather leaven then lacke.

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[121] PRO, SP16/458/10.

[Marginal note] Taffata for the facing of my doublett & pocketts. [122]

Perhaps most surprisingly for us, both William Calley senior and junior also commissioned Richard Harvey to buy clothing and cloth for their wives. While the women had stipulated what they wanted, Harvey had not only to obtain this choice but also to decide, with the tailor, on styles, fabrics, accessories and size. 'My Wiffe', wrote Sir William, 'desires you to buy her as muche of the verry beste and Richest black flowred Satten, of the beste worke, yett fitte for an antient wooman, as will make her a straite boddied gowne [...] the laste boddes you sent her were verry fitte.' [123] William Calley junior had further requests: 'a blacke sattaine gowne for my wife, or a petticoate and wascoate which is most warne [...] but most especially I intreate you not to referre the choosing of the sattaine to the Taylor [...] alsoe a sett of knotts as may bee most suteable for a blacke sattaine gowne'.[124]

Half a century earlier Philip Gawdy, residing in London, had similarly supplied his mother, father, brother and brother's wife. Along with searching out fabrics, trimmings and garments as requested, he offered his opinion as to the quality of the purchases, and his observations of current fashionable trends. For example, to his sister-in-law Anne, for whom in 1587 he was procuring material, he wrote that, 'I can assure yow that bothe the quene, and all the gentlewomen at the Courte weare the uery fashion of yo^{r} tuff taffata gowne with an open wired sleve and suche a cutt, and it is now the newest fashion. For cappes and french hoodes I fynde no change in the world all whatsoever els you shall vndoubtedly be provided of'. A year and a half later, though, styles of head wear seemed to have altered dramatically:

> I have sent yow downe according to your request half an ell of blacke velvett, half a quarter of white satten, and a paire of truncke sleeves. The pryce yow shall knowe hearafter. I have bought them as well and as good cheape as my skill might afford me, for the manner of wearing their hoodes as the courte. Some weare cripins some weare none. Some weare sattin of all collors with their upper border and some weare none. Some one of them weares this daye with all theise fashions, and the nexte daye without. So that I fynd nothing

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[122] PRO, SP16/400/62.

[123] PRO, SP16/392/15.

[124] PRO, SP16/392/16.

more certayne then their vncertaynty, which made me forbeare to sende yow any thing further of myne owne devise vntill I heare further from yow.[125]

These letters from the Calley and Gawdy families then, although unremarkable at the time, reveal a great deal of knowledgeable activity concerning dress. Far from being an area limited to or controlled by women, it seems that men participated with equal - if not greater - freedom and power. To do so they needed skills that most consumers today no longer have. The expertise required for the selection of fabrics, the devising of garments and the observation of fashionable styles also helps explain the power of clothing, in early modern society, to assert personality and character. When an individual's dressed image directly reflected his or her skills and creativity, it is no wonder that reputation was lodged so firmly in appearances.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, the phrase 'clothes make the man' was more than a rhetorical flourish. Individuals materialized an identity through the medium of dress, and this identity gathered meaning through being seen in the public domain. From our historical and cultural distance, it is easy to underestimate the seriousness of this proposition. To appreciate it more fully we need now to turn to the law. Through the almost forgotten acts and proclamations of apparel, early modern authority attempted to control access to appearances, and police the protean power of clothes.

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[125] *Letters of Philip Gawdy*, ed. by Isaac Herbert Jeayes, The Roxburgh Club, 148 (London, 1906), pp. 28, 49.

Chapter 4

NONE SHALL WEAR

On 11 January 1591/2, an attorney by the name of Kinge appeared before the Privy Council. Kinge was 'presumptuous' and presented himself before their Lordships 'in apparrell unfitt for his calling, with a guilt rapier, extreame greate ruffes and lyke unseemelie apparrell'. Presumably arrayed in his best, the unfortunate - or foolish - Kinge had dressed without regard for the acts and proclamations of apparel, and was in breach of the law. The Privy Council recommended that he be dismissed from his office and lose his job.[1]

Such regulation by law of what a person may or may not wear is, within the broad outlines of 'decency', today in the West considered an unacceptable infringement of individual rights. Yet from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries in England this legal constraint was deemed both necessary and desirable.[2] During the Tudor regime, especially, the regulatory project was pursued with particular energy, until by Elizabeth's reign we have reached 'an era of unprecedented activity in the history of restraints on apparel.'[3] However, in 1604 after the accession of the first Stuart king, all laws were repealed. Why, then, was there this particular trajectory to the control of dress in England, and what were the reasons behind Parliament and monarch so vigorously seeking to regulate its

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[1] *APC*, 1591-92, p. 175. This case is also cited in Wilfred Hooper, 'The Tudor Sumptuary Laws', *English Historical Review*, 30 (1915), 433-49 (p. 445); and in N. B. Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', in *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. by D.C. Coleman and A.H. Johns (London, 1976), pp. 132-65 (p. 147).

[2] Laws controlling consumption date back to Classical Greece and Rome, and were also found in early Chinese and Japanese cultures. During the medieval and early modern periods many European countries other than England also instituted legislation of this type. See for example Kent Robert Greenfield, *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg: A Study in Paternal Government* (Baltimore, 1918); Diane Hughes, 'Sumptuary Laws and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. by John Bossy (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 69-99, and 'Distinguishing Signs: Ear-Rings, Jews and Franciscan Rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance City', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), 3-59; Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (London, 1996); Ronald Rainey, 'Dressing Down the Dressed-Up: Reproving Feminine Attire in Renaissance Florence', in *Renaissance Society and Culture*, ed. by John Monfasani and Ronald G. Musto (New York, 1991), pp. 217-37; Catherine Kovesi Killerby, 'Practical Problems in the Enforcement of Italian Sumptuary Law, 1200-1500', in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trevor Dean and K.J.P. Lowe (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 99-120; John M. Vincent, *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich 1370-1800* (1935; repr. New York, 1969). Nor was such legislation confined to Europe at this time, for it appeared in seventeenth-century New England, see Gary North, 'The Puritan Experiment with Sumptuary Legislation', *Freeman*, 24 (1974), 341-55.

[3] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 436.

consumption and display?

Owing, perhaps, to the perceptual gulf that lies between modern and early modern thought on this matter, the historiography surrounding the official control of dress through sumptuary law is slight and, on occasion, slighting. G.R. Elton discussed two measures concerning apparel. A law limiting the selling on credit of foreign clothing and accessories he termed 'very peculiar' and 'a quirky little piece of paternalism'. A second statute making compulsory the wearing of caps for those under the rank of gentleman, he described as 'extraordinary'.[4] Similarly Lawrence Stone turned his attention to a bill concerning apparel debated in the Commons in 1614. In particular this measure sought to restrict the wearing of gold and silver lace, and gilt swords and spurs. Those caught in breach of the law were to have the offending items confiscated, and were 'to be accounted an enemy of the state' and 'a Fool by Act of Parliament.' Stone described this as 'absurd'.[5] Even N.G. Harte, who advocated the re-examination of the role of the acts of apparel in the pre-industrial economy, called this body of laws 'one of the most curious of all episodes in the history of social organisation'.[6] In contrast is the recent revisionary work by Alan Hunt, which not only offers a more sympathetic account, but also the overt aim of rescuing sumptuary legislation from 'a lack of scholarly attention'.[7] Hunt had ample justification for this, for apart from Harte's text the best known and most frequently cited works in the field of English dress control remain two studies undertaken in the first part of the twentieth century. They are an article of 1915 written by the antiquarian, Wilfred Hooper, and a monograph by Frances Baldwin published in 1926.[8]

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[4] 5 Eliz. I, c. 6 (1563) and 13 Eliz. I, c. 19 (1571). G.R. Elton, *The Parliament of England 1559-1581* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 273, 67, 253.

[5] *Proceedings in Parliament 1614*, ed. by Maija Jansson (Philadelphia, 1988), p.78. *CJ*, I, 464. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), p. 566.

[6] Harte, 'State Control of Dress', p. 133.

[7] Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (London, 1996), p. 392.

[8] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws'; Frances Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore, 1926). Baldwin's study was written under the aegis of John Vincent, Professor of European History at John Hopkins University from 1905 to 1925, and thereafter Professor Emeritus. Vincent's long-held interest in this area led him to produce a discussion of European blue laws in 1897, a monograph exploring Swiss costume regulation in 1936, and the entry on sumptuary legislation in the 1937 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, see 'European Blue Laws', *Annual Report of American Historical Association* (1897), pp. 355-73; *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern and Zurich 1370-1800* (Baltimore, 1935); 'Sumptuary Legislation', *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, 14 (New York, 1937), pp. 464-

Despite a recent trend towards the uncovering of early consumer culture, then, the attempted regulation of the consumption of apparel has, by and large, been overlooked.[9] Indeed, as we have seen, if anything dress control has been dismissed as a false start on the march to modernity - an enterprise that, if only historical actors had the benefit of hindsight, they would have agreed was 'curious', 'absurd' and 'extraordinary'. However, firmly entrapped by their present, contemporaries regarded sumptuary legislation as a serious and sensible matter. So firstly, what were these laws, that though of serious intent at the time have been so relegated to the backwaters of historiographical interest and understanding? Secondly, why was this legal activity focused on clothing and, with a marked increase in urgency over the sixteenth century, seeking to regulate its display? Finally why, after such legislative commitment, was the project apparently abandoned so abruptly after 1604?

Dress and the Law

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century there were nine major statutes relating to apparel.[10] The first appeared in 1337 and prohibited all but the most elevated of ranks from wearing fur and foreign cloth. In 1363 a more detailed act expanded on this theme, listing a greater number of social estates or occupations, and a larger number of prohibited textiles. Thereafter legislation became evermore complex, each act specifying more precise gradations in the social hierarchy and a more comprehensive schedule of disallowed

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66. Generally speaking, blue laws are any restrictive enactments motivated by a strict morality. They tend to be sumptuary in nature. Another of Vincent's students, Kent Robert Greenfield, published his dissertation on sumptuary law in Nürnberg in 1918, see *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg: A Study in Paternal Government* (Baltimore, 1918). Although the work issuing from Baltimore by Greenfield, Baldwin and Vincent was produced at around the same time as Hooper's article, it seems that neither the English antiquarian, nor the American contingent, knew of each other's research.

[9] Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978); Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington, 1988); Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990); Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1991); Lorna Wetherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, 2nd edn (London, 1996); John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993); John Brewer and Susan Staves (eds), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London, 1995); Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London, 1996).

[10] Both Harte and Hunt concentrate on these nine statutes. There were also minor laws passed in 1355, 1364, 1420 and 1477. In addition to this legislative activity, the Commons unsuccessfully petitioned the Crown for sumptuary regulation in 1402 and 1406. Baldwin gives a detailed account of all of this in the first four chapters of *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation*.

fabrics. After 1363 a long legislative pause followed until major acts of apparel were passed in 1463 and 1483. Then came a flurry of Henrician regulatory activity with legislation in 1510, twice in 1515, and again in 1533. This last statute remained in force until its repeal in 1604 and, along with an additional act of 1554, became the backbone of a remarkable burst of Elizabethan regulatory fervour.[11] Elizabeth and her Privy Council's contribution to the control of apparel came chiefly through proclamation. Whereas Henry had issued five of these orders, Elizabeth - in keeping with her more active use of proclamation[12] - issued a total of twelve.[13] In a reign lasting only seven more years, Elizabeth thus promulgated over twice as many commands concerning apparel as her father. While the Henrician proclamations made only minor alterations to existing law, several of their Elizabethan counterparts instituted fundamental changes. Elizabeth, however, was not the only Tudor monarch to show such an interest in the dress laws. Henry was personally responsible for portions of the second 1515 law,[14] and in 1552 Edward wrote a draft bill for apparel which probably provided the text for the measure introduced to the parliament of the same year.[15] Apparel was important business, and appropriate for the attention of the legislative assembly, and the crown.

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[11] 11 Edw. III, c. 2 and c. 4 (1337). 37 Edw. III, c. 8-c. 14 (1363). 3 Edw. IV, c. 5 (1463). 22 Edw. IV, c. 1 (1483). 1 Hen. VIII, c. 14 (1510). 6 Hen. VIII, c. 1 (1515). 7 Hen. VIII, c. 6 (1515). 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13 (1533). 1 & 2 Phil. & Mary, c. 2 (1554). 1 Jac. I, c. 25 (1604).

[12] Frederic Youngs, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Queens* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 58. The average yearly number of proclamations issued in Henry's reign was 6, and in Elizabeth's was 8.

[13] Proclamation 6 June 1516, 8 Hen. VIII (79.5). Proclamation 19 February 1517, 8 Hen. VIII (80). Proclamation February 1534, 25 Hen. VIII (143). Proclamation 27 May 1534, 26 Hen. VIII (146). Proclamation February 1536, 27 Hen. VIII (163). Proclamation 21 October 1559, 1 Eliz. I (464). Proclamation 6 May 1562, 4 Eliz. I (493). Proclamation 7 May 1562, 4 Eliz. I (494). Proclamation 7 May 1562, 4 Eliz. I (495). Proclamation 7 May 1562, 4 Eliz. I (496). Proclamation 12 February 1566, 8 Eliz. I (542). Proclamation 15 June 1574, 16 Eliz. I (601). Proclamation 16 February 1577, 19 Eliz. I (623). Proclamation 12 February 1580, 22 Eliz. I (646). Proclamation 13 February 1588, 30 Eliz. I (697). Proclamation 6 July 1597, 39 Eliz. I (786). Proclamation 23 July 1597, 39 Eliz. I (787). See *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. by Paul Hughes and James Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven, 1969). All subsequent references to Tudor proclamations will be from these volumes. In addition, the Privy Council published the order *Articles Agreed upon by the Lordes... for a Reformation of their seruauntes in certayne Abuses of Apparell*, (20 October 1559) STC 7903.

[14] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 434.

[15] *Literary Remains of King Edward VI*, ed. by J.G. Nichols (London, 1857; repr. New York, 1964), pp. 495-98. For W.K. Jordan, Edward's interest in the bill of apparel is further evidence of Edward's concern with 'social and economic dislocations', see W.K. Jordan, *Edward VI: the Threshold of Power* (London, 1970), p. 26, also pp. 421-22. Loach, however, is more cautious. She sees this, and other documents in Edward's hand as evidence of interest in state affairs, but thinks they may have been copied or written with assistance, see Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI*, ed. by George Bernard and Penry Williams (New Haven, 1999), pp. 98-100.

Given the contemporary view that proclamations carried less weight than statute law[16] - only fulfilling the legal equivalent of emphatic reminder or emergency measure - Elizabeth's rule of apparel by proclamation is extremely important. Since all the official attempts to obtain parliamentary legislation in this area failed, it might reasonably be assumed that the government had no choice but to turn to repeated proclamations.[17] However, it seems from the chronology that the explanation is not this simple. In all but one of the cases, the proclamations pre-date the relevant bill, not the other way round.[18] It is more likely, therefore, that the government envisaged the proclamations as a preparation for statute law - a temporary measure to be strengthened by parliamentary authority. Frederic Youngs also notes that all but one of these proclamations were issued during, or within a few days of, the law terms. The effect would have been that of 'a written reminder' to the justices, reinforcing the matters of importance to the Queen and her Council.[19]

But the regulation of apparel by royal proclamation was not simply a de facto situation arising from the failure of proposed statutes. On at least two occasions the crown sought to strengthen its legislative authority in this area by proposing proclamation as a *replacement* for statute law. In February 1576 a bill for the reformation of excess in apparel was introduced into parliament. Notwithstanding the expressed concern that 'disorder of apparrell is very greate in this tyme', the bill met with strong resistance in the Commons.[20] There were five objections to the measure, the chief of which concerned the legislative power it would give the crown. For 'th'effect of the bill was that the Quene's Majestie from tyme to tyme might by her proclamacion appoynt what kynde of apparrell every degeree of persons within the realme should weare'. While the speakers judiciously pointed out that such a gracious sovereign would never offer an injustice, this 'might prove

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[16] Rudolph Heinze, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Kings* (Cambridge, 1976), esp. pp. 293-95, and Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, Part 1.

[17] Bill for punishment of such as shall make or wear great hosen (1563), Bill touching apparel (1566), Bill against great hosen (1571), Bill for regulating apparel (1576), Bill for reformation of excess of apparel (1589), Bill for apparel (1597).

[18] The exception being the proclamation issued 16 February 1577 (623), the year following the bill for regulating apparel introduced into the Lords.

[19] Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, p. 33.

[20] *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. by T.E. Hartley, 3 vols (Leicester, 1981-1995), I, 454.

a dangerous precedent in tyme to come'.[21] The bill was rewritten and returned to the Lords, where it foundered apparently through lack of approval and time. The second attempt to extend royal prerogative came in 1604, when a bill was again sent from the Lords to the Commons. This measure contained the repeal of all former apparel laws, and the provision for the King to rule by proclamation. Such was the opposition to this provision, that it was rejected in the first reading. As a result the bill was rewritten, and only the clause rescinding dress control survived to become law. The accepted view is that the disappearance of clothing regulation was thus a reflection of political manoeuvring, and not a planned change of legislative direction.[22] That the regulation of dress was linked to matters of prerogative and constitutional power may be read as evidence of its contemporary seriousness. Certainly both Elizabeth and James sought personal control over this area, and just as certainly sections of the Commons resisted any inroads on their authority in this matter. To repeat, apparel was important business.

The first justification for its regulation was economic. The motivations were paternalistic and sought to secure the financial health of both the realm and the individual. Legal restraints aimed to ensure that English wealth did not leave the country in exchange for foreign textiles and garments. Moreover, by placing limits on allowable personal expenditure, individuals would be less tempted to over-indulge in finery and thus better able to live within their means. This justification was frequently repeated. All the Henrician statutes made reference to 'the greate and costly array and apparrell used wythin this Realme', which has been 'the Occasion of grete impoverisshing of divers of the Kings Sugiects'.[23] Elizabeth's orders continued in the same vein. The argument was put most clearly in a proclamation from 1574:

> The excess of apparel and the superfluity of unnecessary foreign wares thereto belonging now of late years is grown by sufferance to such an extremity that the manifest decay not only of a great part of the wealth of the whole realm

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[21] Ibid. The recollections of this bill are possibly Sir Walter Mildmay's (p. 423). He did not record the identity of individual speakers.

[22] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 449; Harte, 'State Control of Dress', p. 148; Joan Kent, 'Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of "Personal Conduct" in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 46 (1973), 41-65 (pp. 56-57).

[23] 1 Hen. VIII, c. 14, 1510. The statutes of 1515 are very similarly worded. The 1533 statute makes reference to 'the utter impoverysshement and undoyng of many inexpert and light persones', see 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13.

generally is like to follow (by bringing into the realm such superfluities of silks, cloths of gold, silver, and other most vain devices of so great cost for the quantity thereof as of necessity the moneys and treasure of the realm is and must be yearly conveyed out of the same to answer the said excess) but also particularly the wasting and undoing of a great number of young gentlemen [...] who allured by the vain show of those things, do not only consume themselves, their goods, and lands which their parents have left unto them, but also run into such debts and shifts [...] whereby they are not any ways serviceable to their country as otherwise they might be.[24]

A further economic argument concerned the protection of home industries. By outlawing the wearing of foreign fabrics and dress accessories the apparel laws aimed to manipulate consumer desire, and channel spending towards locally produced garments. If wearing imported dress was illegal, the demand for clothing could only be satisfied by home-grown fashions. A typical injunction, for example, forbade that any man 'under the Estate of a Duke Marquise Erle and their Children [...] weare in any parte of his apparell any Wollen Clothe made oute of this Realme of England Irlande Wales Calice Berwike or the Marches of the same, Excepte in Bonettes only'.[25] Most of the laws controlling dress worked in this negative way, prohibiting access to forbidden sartorial fruit. A few, however, were prescriptive. Instead of disallowing the use of foreign goods such provisions enforced the wearing of English items. The best known Elizabethan examples are the laws for the compulsory wearing of woollen caps. With the exception of 'Maydens Ladyes and Gentlewomen' and 'al Noble Personages', everyone else over the age of six 'shall use and weare upon the Saboth and Holy Daye [...] upon their Head one Cappe of Woll Knytt, thicked and dressed in England, made wthin this Realme of England'.[26] It seems that campaigns to 'Buy British' have a long established precedent.

This protectionist aspect of the control of dress continued well after the disappearance of the apparel acts. In 1662 a measure was passed prohibiting the import of foreign bonelace, cut work, embroidery, fringe, band strings, buttons and needle work.[27]

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[24] Proclamation 15 June 1574 (601).

[25] 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13.

[26] 13 Eliz. I, c. 19.

[27] 14 Car. II, c. 13.

The following year a bill for 'Sumptuary laws, and laws to prevent encroachments in trade by Jews and French, and any other foreigners' appeared in the Commons.[28] Five years later, in 1668, it was ordered that the Lords' committee for the Advancement of Trade 'take into their Consideration the Sumptuary Laws, and the Fashions of Apparel [...] and prepare what they shall think fit to offer to the House concerning the same'.[29] As we have already seen, other Restoration measures made compulsory the burial of the dead in garments or shrouds made only of wool; legislation which stayed in force until 1814.[30] A very late attempt at such regulation was a bill prohibiting the wearing of gold and silver lace in apparel, and another against the wearing of foreign gold or silver wire thread.[31] These appeared in 1743, almost a century and a half after the 1604 repeal of the apparel acts.

The economic beliefs behind all these measures are generally given the name of mercantilism.[32] This theory posits a model for fiscal health that would not be unfamiliar to Mr Micawber. To paraphrase the latter, if annual exports bring in reserves of bullion and currency, and annual imports do not expend it, then the result is happiness. To ensure this favourable balance of trade with more money flowing into the realm than out, a range of regulatory laws were passed, including those controlling dress. Later mercantile tracts came increasingly to advocate consumption as a key to prosperity, but sixteenth-century articulations of this theory were much less prepared to endorse its merits. The first of these, *A Discourse of the Commonweal of This Realm of England*, appeared in 1549. In this text attributed to Sir Thomas Smith, the author made a clear distinction between locally produced items of necessity, and foreign luxuries made 'to serve pleasure'.[33] Fine clothing, naturally, fitted squarely into the second category. Items such as perfumed gloves had to

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[28] *Failed Legislation, 1660-1800: Extracted from the Commons and Lords Journals*, ed. by Julian Hoppit (London, 1997), p. 66.

[29] *LJ*, XII, 228.

[30] 18 Car. II, c. 4. 30 Car. II, c. 3. 32 Car. II, c. 1. 54 Geo. III, c. 108.

[31] *Failed Legislation*, ed. by Hoppit, p. 344.

[32] 'The mercantile system' and 'system of commerce' were phrases used in 1766 by Adam Smith to describe contemporary economic theory and practice. The term 'mercantilism' was adopted by economic historians late in the nineteenth century to refer to the political economy existing between the medieval period and the emergence of laissez-faire doctrines. See Walter Minchinton (ed.), *Mercantilism* (Lexington, 1969) and Charles Wilson, *Mercantilism*, Historical Association Pamphlets, general ser., 37 (1958).

[33] *A Discourse of the Commonweal of This Realm of England*, ed. by Mary Dewar, The Folger Shakespeare Library (Charlottesville, 1969), p. 68.

be eschewed because they cost 'inestimable treasure',[34] because they occasioned the decay of domestic industry, and because excessive apparel was morally corrupting. For Smith, 'suffering for fashion' would conjure not physical discomfort, but economic and spiritual peril. Written some eighty years later, although not published until 1664, was Thomas Mun's *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade.* Mun retained the distinction between foreign and domestic products, but separated the economic and moral argument. Advising that we 'soberly refrain from excessive consumption of forraign wares in our [...] rayment', Mun called for 'such good laws as are strictly practised in other Countries against the said excesses'.[35] If, however, the said excesses were the product of local labours, the situation was reversed: 'and if in our rayment we will be prodigal, yet let this be done with our own materials and manufactures, as Cloth, Lace, Imbroderies, Cutworks and the like, where the excess of the rich may be the employment of the poor'.[36]

For the next generation of mercantilists active in the 1680s-1690s, even that distinction between foreign and local wares was spurious. All consumption was positive, since it stimulated growth in the economy. It was morally bad for an individual to seek material increase, but it was economically good and, moreover, of benefit to society as a whole. In this context Sir Dudley North stated that sumptuary laws were harmful and rendered their nations poor, since 'Men by those laws are confin'd to narrower Expence than otherwise they would be'.[37] Entrepreneur, Nicholas Barbon, even identified fashion as being the chief promoter of the mercantile economy. It was 'the Spirit and Life of *Trade*' because 'it occasions the Expence of Cloaths, before the Old ones are worn out'.[38] While, as we have seen, the call for renewed dress restrictions continued into the eighteenth century, the changing climate of economic opinion probably served slowly to isolate this view as old-fashioned and impractical. In the gradual acceptance of a developing mercantile theory that consumption promoted prosperity, laws restraining

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[34] Ibid., p. 63.

[35] Thomas Mun, *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade* (Oxford, 1959), p. 7.

[36] Ibid., p. 9.

[37] Sir Dudley North, *Discourses upon Trade* (1691), in Richard Grassby, *The English Gentleman in Trade: The Life and Works of Sir Dudley North, 1641-1691* (Oxford, 1994), p. 298.

[38] Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade*, (1690; repr. Baltimore, 1905), p. 33.

excessive apparel would appear as increasingly misguided, if not downright harmful.[39]

That dress was an object of actual, *or* attempted fiscal control, indicates its importance as an area of early modern expenditure. This importance remained constant over a considerable period. For example, it has been estimated that in 1688 a quarter of England's total personal spending was on clothing. Even the poorest - whose total annual expenditure was only about £3 - are calculated as allotting about eighteen per cent of this to apparel.[40] One hundred years earlier the levels of spending were remarkably similar. A suggested budget for the London poor of the early 1580s estimates that between sixteen and twenty per cent of expenditure went on clothing.[41] Indeed, after food, apparel formed the most significant area of household cost in the early modern period.[42] Among the better sort, expenditure on apparel rose to cover those 'unnecessary foreign wares' alluded to in the proclamation of 1574, and so disliked by the earlier mercantilists. For the aristocracy dress was a phenomenon created by an extraordinary merging of bullion, textiles and gems (Fig. 37). Worn not only as an accessory - like the 138 gold buttons on

Figure 37: Sir Christopher Hatton, probably 17th century after a portrait of 1589, Unknown artist
Source: Ribeiro, *Gallery of Fashion*
Hatton's satin doublet is trimmed with bands of gold lace, and fastens with gold buttons. His cloak and breeches are decorated with pearls set in gold. His velvet hat is edged with black pearls and rubies in gold mounts. About his neck he wears a large gold chain.

[39] See Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, 1978), Chapter 7.

[40] N.B. Harte, 'The Economics of Clothing in the Late Seventeenth Century', *Textile History*, 22 (1991), 277-296. This paper is based on the calculations made by Gregory King in the 1690s. Harte graphically indicates the substantial level of expenditure on clothing at this time by comparing it to the ten per cent of total expenditure accounted for by clothing in England today. For recent research which supports the accuracy of King's calculations, see Margaret Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England, and the Accuracy of Gregory King', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 53 (2000), 677-705.

[41] Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 194.

[42] Garthine Walker, 'Women, Theft and the World of Stolen Goods', in *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, ed. by J. Kermode and G. Walker (London, 1994), pp. 81-105 (pp. 88-89).

Sir Edmund Bacon's suit[43] - gold and silver were drawn into thread and woven into cloth and lace. Gems, too, could be fashioned as an integral part of a garment; the finest of cauls, for example, consisted of nothing but pearls or gold strung on a hair net. The remarkable levels that financial outlay on clothing reached in court circles can be glimpsed in the bill for a set of ceremonial robes ordered by the Earl of Salisbury in 1625. The fabrics cost £247, gold and silver lace and buttons amounted to £120, and the value of the embroidery was £350. The total cost was a staggering £976.[44] On a slightly more modest scale were the slippers that Philip Sidney gave to Elizabeth in 1584. Of black velvet they were all over 'enbradered w[i]t[h] venys golde perle and smale garnetts w[i]t[h] aborder in the Top of seconde sede perle and smale garnetts in Collytts of golde'.[45] In a climate of concern about reserves of bullion, the effect of such conspicuous wearing of wealth must have been extreme.

It is thus unsurprising to find a close temporal - and presumably conceptual - link between the laws controlling dress, and those that regulated the consumption and expenditure of precious metals. For example, in 1510 Henry's first parliament passed the Act agaynst carrying out of this Realme any Coyne Plate or Jewelle. The next statute recorded is the Act agaynst wearing of costly Apparrell.[46] In the first year of Elizabeth's reign, this linkage recurred with two proclamations of 1559 prohibiting the export of all gold and coin, and enforcing statutes of apparel.[47] The full title given to the unsuccessful bills for apparel in James's first year on the throne included the phrase 'restraining the excessive wearing of Cloth of Gold, Cloth of Silver, and Gold and Silver Lace, and Embroideries'. It is evident from the Commons and Lords Journals that, as with the protectionist motive, this conceptual link endured the demise of the acts of apparel and

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[43] Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 565.

[44] Ibid.

[45] J.L. Nevinson, 'New Year's Gifts to Queen Elizabeth I, 1584', *Costume*, 9 (1975), 27-31 (p. 29).

[46] 1 Hen. VIII, c. 13 and 1 Hen. VIII, c. 14. In 1512 there were two related acts: An Act against carrying out of the realme Coyne Plate&c (3 Hen.VIII, c. 1), and An Act concerning Hattes and Capps (3 Hen.VIII, c. 15). The latter forbade the importation of foreign hats to anyone under the degree of knight. 1529 saw two similar laws: An Acte lymmitinge the prizes of Wollen hattes Bonnetts & Cappes made beyonde the see and brought to be soold withyn this Realme (21 Hen.VIII, c. 9), and An Acte against the Caryinge of Laten Brasse and suche metall mixed beyonde the Seas (21 Hen.VIII, c. 10). Between 1531 and 1533 there were two more measures: a proclamation prohibiting the export of gold and silver (18 July 1531, 23 Hen. VIII (133)); and An Acte for Reformacyon of Excess in Apparayle (24 Hen.VIII, c. 13).

[47] Proclamations 1 May 1559, 1 Eliz. I (457); 21 October 1559 (464).

even provided an impetus for attempts to renew them. In 1614 a bill against apparel was sent to the same committee that was considering the bill against the vain and wasteful consumption of gold and silver. This was thought appropriate because, as MP John Hoskins pointed out, the bills were of 'one nature'.[48] Between February and April of the 1621 parliament there were four bills being discussed together: a bill against apparel, prohibiting the use of gold and silver to all but the royal family; a bill against the vain consumption of gold and silver; a bill for the better venting of cloth; and another for the better wearing of cloth.[49] This debate occurred in the midst of an overwhelming concern about the 'decay of trade', arising from a shortage of coin.[50] As Sir William Cope commented while discussing the bill for apparel, 'Again you know we were about a main business, vizt. To find out the cause of the want of gold and silver.'[51] Later on in the same session Sir James Perrot, in a debate about the advisability and cost of war, moved that Parliament 'send home the nobility and gentry a sumptuary lawe'.[52] The financing of war as a specific motive for dress laws reappeared with the only Stuart proclamation concerning apparel. In the June of 1643 Charles, in command of an underpaid army, issued an order against excessive dress. In describing sartorial indulgence, this proclamation identified 'the great wast and consumption of Gold, and Silver therein', which was 'at all times very unfit, hurtfull to particular Persons, and to the Kingdom, but in these times most insufferable'.[53] In 1662 - the same year as the act prohibiting the importation of foreign bonelace -

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[48] *Proceedings in Parliament 1614*, ed. by Jansson, p. 155.

[49] *Commons Debates 1621*, ed. by Wallace Notestein, Frances Relf and Hartley Simpson, 7 vols (New Haven, 1935), II, 35-36, 114-15, 307; III, 18-19; IV, 59, 88, 240-41; V, 86, 342, 465-66, 482.

[50] Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621-1629* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 85-86. It was this economic crisis that prompted Mun to write his mercantilist pamphlet. The topic is covered fully in Barry Supple, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England 1600-1642: A Study in the Instability of a Mercantile Economy* (Cambridge, 1964).

[51] *Commons Debates 1621*, ed. by Notestein, Relf and Simpson, II, 115.

[52] Ibid., V, p. 403. In his wide-ranging speech Perrot sketched previous military victories, and compared this former glory to the current and parlous condition of English finances. This he attributed to a number of things: excessive consumption of dress and tobacco; expense occasioned by the fashion for urban - particularly London - life; and the trading activities of the East India Company. Perrot, committedly Puritan in outlook, not only argued for apparel bills. He also supported other measures regulating personal conduct, such as bills controlling drunkenness and sabbath observance. William Cope, less extreme than Perrot, supported the 1621 apparel bill in principle, but not in practice.

[53] *Stuart Royal Proclamations, Volume II*, ed. by James Larkin (Oxford, 1983), 'Against wast and excesse in Apparell', Proclamation 9 June 1643 (422). Larkin notes the financial hardship, and the elegant dress, of the royalist army.

Parliament also considered a further three related measures. These were the bill to prevent the melting down of coin, a bill to prevent frauds in gold and silver, and a bill against the wearing of gold and silver lace. Finally, in 1695 the cost of fashion and the cost of fighting were again tied together in a bill introduced to the Commons, prohibiting wearing of gold and silver during war.[54]

Concomitant with these mercantilist concerns for economic well being was a fear of the moral results of financial hardship. The legislation constructed the perils of impoverishment in two ways. Firstly - and with more than an echo of the modern hostility towards drug culture - it was feared that individuals who overspent on clothing would be forced to crime to support their 'habit'. (In this early modern situation the dual meaning of the word has a satisfyingly apposite polysemy.) So, those of the King's subjects who were ruined by their expensive apparel were 'provoked meny of them to robbe and to doo extorcion and other unlawfull Dedes to maynteyne therby ther costeley arrey'.[55] Sir Thomas Elyot, in his political treatise *The Governor*, evidently shared this concern. 'Howe many semely personagis', he asked, 'by outrage in [...] excess of apparaile / be induced to thefte and robbry / and some tyme to murdre / to the inquietation of good men / and finally to their owne destruction?'[56] In Elizabethan proclamations this complaint resurfaced. The 'pride that such inferior persons take in their garments' drive many 'for their maintenance to robbing and stealing by the highway'.[57]

While the inferior sort turned to crime to relieve their financial necessity, this same proclamation constructed a different response for their betters undone by excessive tastes in clothing. To them the measure attributed the second danger in impoverishment: 'the decay and lack of hospitality' so frequently bemoaned in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A common topos in conduct literature, liberality was the duty and the sign of nobility. A Christian virtue, generosity had very practical application, providing for all and

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[54] *Failed Legislation*, ed. by Hoppit, p. 206.

[55] 1 Hen. VIII, c. 14.

[56] Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor* (1531, repr. Menston, 1970), fol. 128[r].

[57] Proclamation 6 July 1597 (786). In *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750* (London, 1984), pp. 99-120 and 176-77, J.A. Sharpe addresses the growing contemporary belief that crime was an activity of the poor. He concluded that this fear of the lawless masses found expression in many different types of legislative response. Garthine Walker has found that in many areas clothing and textiles were stolen more often than any other item: 'Women, Theft and the World of Stolen Goods', in *Women, Crime and the Courts*, ed. by Kermode and Walker, p. 87 and p. 101, n. 20.

cementing together the different orders of society. But, according to the same texts, the generous host was an increasingly rare breed.[58] Proclamations are not the only sources in which a perceived decline of hospitality was linked to a perceived rise in ostentatious dressing. Smith's mercantilist tract of 1549 described the elaborate wearing of servingmen who 'go more costly in apparel [...] than their masters were wont to do'. This extravagance was not restricted as it should have been, but rather their masters vied to see whose retinue could be clothed most lavishly. Through such excesses 'they are fain all the rest of the year to keep the fewer servants'.[59] The author of *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving-Men* felt similarly. 'Trust me,' he proclaimed:

> I holde this excessive costly Apparrell, a great cause why Gentlemen cannot maynteyne their wonted and accustomed bountie and liberalitie in hospitalitie & house-keeping: for when as the Mercers book shall come, *Item* for so many yardes of Cloth of Golde, of Siluer, Veluet, Sattin, Taffata, or such lyke ware: the Goldsmithes *Debet*, for Chaynes, Ringes, Jewels, Pearles, and precious Stones: the Taylors Bill, so much for such a Sute of laced Satten, and such lyke superfluous charges, amounting in one yeere to more then the reuenues of his Landes, the charge of house-keeping, and other necessaries vndefrayde, how can he then chose but eyther make others Gentlemen by possessing his Inheritaunce, or els betake him to London, or some other sanctuarie, where he may lyue priuate so many yeeres, as he is runne ouershooes, that debtes thereby may be payde, and defectes supplyed.[60]

As we have seen, the broadly economic cluster of beliefs thus shaded into concerns about crime and luxury. Lying behind the acts of apparel there also existed, however, a set of discourses which articulated moral values more overtly. In order to understand these it is necessary to look at wider contemporary views of the origins and purpose of dress. Clothing, or so received opinion ran, was necessary to hide nakedness. Moreover, this nakedness was not so much physical as spiritual. Early modern discovery of the New

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[58] For a full discussion see Felicity Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 102 (1984), 66-93; and Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990). For an essay placing attitudes to hospitality in the context of late Elizabethan policy towards the poor, see Steve Hindle, 'Dearth, Fasting and Alms: The Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England', *Past and Present*, 172 (2001), 44-86.

[59] *A Discourse of the Commonweal*, pp. 81, 82.

[60] I.M., *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving-Men*, sig. H2^{v}.

World had led to a burgeoning anthropological interest in which the apparel of indigenous people was noted keenly.[61] Despite what might be inclement conditions, sixteenth-century observers saw natives in simple and minimal dress.[62] This anthropological observation strengthened the pre-existing religious belief that clothing was a direct result of the Fall. Adam and Eve's nakedness first became apparent to them because of their sin, and clothing was thus a sign of our moral imperfections; a result and daily reminder of spiritual weakness. As John Manningham reported, writing down the gist of a zealously delivered public sermon he heard: 'Pride in apparell is pride of our shame, for it was made to cover it, and as yf one should embroyder a sheete wherein he had done pennaunce, and shewe it in bragging manner'.[63] A proof of this was the 'noble savage', who existed in a pre-lapsarian and minimally clothed innocence. As Walter Hammond, in his description of the inhabitants of Madagascar wrote in 1640: 'Sin and apparel entered both together [...] it was our evil custom that cloathed us, and their Innocency and Freedom of Nature that keeps them naked.'[64]

The wearing of fine apparel was thus a two-fold immorality. It was not only evidence of pride - the chief of all vices - but it was taking pride in our morally flawed state. In this way vanity opened the well-dressed path to all sorts of graver sins: pride of apparel was the slippery slope to damnation. Thus a case of demonic possession that occurred in a gentry family was described in sartorial terms. Gripped by the spirit of pride, a thirteen year old girl expressed 'the proud women of our times: who can not cōntent themselues with anie

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[61] Margaret Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1964), addresses European interest in the New World, including the related fashion for collecting curios and exotica. Diana de Marly, 'Pepys and the Fashion for Collecting', *Costume*, 21 (1987), 34-43, looks in detail at the habit of collecting prints of foreign and fancy costume. For a further contribution to the topic see *Constructing Race: Differentiating Peoples in the Early Modern World*, a special edition of *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 54, no. 1 (1997), esp. the article by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, 'Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization', 193-228.

[62] For example, see 'Of the Use of Apparell', in *Montaigne's Essays*, ed. by Stewart, I, 232-35.

[63] *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple 1602-1603*, ed. by Robert Parker Sorlien (Hanover, NH, 1976), pp. 189-90, February 1602.

[64] 'A Paradox: Proving the Inhabitants of the Island, called Madagascar, or St. Lawrence (in things temporal) to be the happiest People in the World', in *Harleian Miscellany*, 8 vols (London, 1744-46), I, 256-57. However, early modern thought was not always so well disposed towards indigenous peoples. As well as seeing the 'primitive' as possessing human nature untainted, contemporary belief also could construct this category as irrational and barbaric - as less than fully human. In this latter view complexity of cultural forms were taken as an index of civilization, and thus minimal clothing indicated, ultimately, diminished humanity, see Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1982).

or modest attire, but are euer readie to followe euery newe and disguised fashion'. Addressing the spirit, Margaret (or the narrator of these events), ran through the most flagrant forms of an aristocratic woman's wardrobe. In a catalogue of detail over two pages long, her demands included garments of silk and velvet, trimmed lavishly with gold lace; a farthingale 'low before and high behinde, and broad on either side'; a bodice stiffened with horn 'to keepe in my belly'; sleeves set out with wire; a rebato starched blue; orange hose; and 'corke shoes of redd spanish leather'.[65]

These beliefs in the immorality of fine clothing help explain certain recurring motifs in the dress laws. The statute of 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13 stated that excessive apparel led to the 'undoyng of many inexpert and light persones inclyned to pride moder of all vices'. It also provided a further link between excessive expenditure on clothing and crime, for the moral weakness of the one led to the depravity of the other. Thus, 'the pride that such inferior persons take in their garments driving many for their maintenance to robbing and stealing by the highway'.[66]

Just as the fiscal beliefs behind the acts of apparel survived despite the demise of the acts themselves, so did their originating moral concerns. Christopher Brooke, a puritan MP for York, played a key role in proposing the ultimately unsuccessful bills of apparel of 1610, 1614 and 1621. As well as making reference to the economic dangers of sumptuous dress, his speeches sound a moral note. In 1621 he blamed the abuse of apparel for the, 'great Cause of the Decay of Treasure, Want of Hospitality. Debts of Knights and Gentlemen. - 18*l.* a Year, by a great Courtier, for Shoe-strings. Now Roses here [...] Cost more than their Fathers Apparel'. Not only was this situation 'a Principal Cause of the Inequality of Trade', it was not 'Consonant to the Law of God, and Nature. - These neither good Apparel for Winter, or Summer. The first Apparel, given by God, Skins. Divers Teaches in Scriptures against this Vanity.'[67] In the Caroline parliaments the link between morality and excessive apparel took on a new aspect. At the general fast ordered in 1625, the Bishops of Bath and Wells and of Salisbury preached to the Lords. These 'Two

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[65] George More, *A True Discourse Concerning the Certaine Possession and Dispossessiõ of 7 Persons in one Familie in Lancashire* (London?,1600), pp. 26-28. David Lindley points out the combined moral outrage and class antagonism which was crystallized in some responses to court dress, see *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (London, 1993), pp. 6-10.

[66] Proclamation 6 July 1597 (786).

[67] *CJ*, I, 523.

Reverend and Learned Prelates' admonished in their sermons 'the Excess of Riot and Apparel.' As a result the upper House both resolved to act as an example in this matter, and to introduce a 'lex sumptuaria' at the next session.[68] In 1626 a bill concerning apparel duly appeared. 1628 saw a similar course of events, with the preparation and aftermath of the general Fast running parallel with the progress of a bill touching apparel. This happened again in 1629 and once more in 1640. Although on the latter two occasions the Lords Journals do not make any causal relationship explicit, the recurrence of the two linked themes seems too marked to be coincidental.

If the first reason for clothing was to cover physical and spiritual shame, its second purpose was, in Bourdieu's terms, distinction. In his critique of the social construction of aesthetics, Bourdieu maintains that 'taste' both makes different socio-economic categories distinct, and in modern society marks the bourgeois class as possessing distinction.[69] Clothing, in the early modern period, was expected to function in the same way. Apparel simultaneously defined the difference between certain groups and conferred the distinction of high status. In the words of Restoration author and Anglican cleric Richard Allestree, an 'end of Apparel is the distinguishing or differencing of persons'.[70]

The two key axes along which dress operated in a classificatory fashion were rank and gender. To take the latter case first: 'Our Apparell was giuen vs as a signe distinctiue to discern betwixt sex and sex, & therefore one to weare the Apparel of another sex, is to participate with the same, and to adulterate the veritie of his owne kinde'.[71] The biblical passage that the puritan Phillip Stubbes draws on here is the Deuteronomic injunction so frequently quoted by contemporary polemicists. 'The woman shal not weare that which perteineth vnto the man, nether shal a man put on womans raiment: for all that do so, *are* abominacion vnto the Lord thy God.'[72] However - and this is of key importance - this particular belief about clothing is entirely absent from the acts of apparel.

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[68] *LJ*, III, 453. On public fasting see Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (eds), *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560-1700* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 20-22.

[69] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (London, 1984). See also Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, pp. 68-69, 108-09.

[70] Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man* (London, 1671), p. 194.

[71] Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, sig. [F5ᵛ].

[72] Deut. 22. 5. Facsimile edition of the Geneva Bible (1560).

Despite an increasingly virulent debate that developed from the latter part of the sixteenth century about the effeminating or masculinizing nature of certain modes of dress, the laws controlling clothing make no mention of it. No legislation prohibits articles of dress to either sex. This is not because transvestitism was so shocking as to be unthinkable. As we shall see in the following chapter, cross-dressing in the theatre was standard practice, and a standard target for anti-theatrical polemics. Furthermore, gendered change of apparel was a stock motif in many plays, and common in popular literature. It was even alluded to occasionally in real life practice, perhaps most famously in James I's 1620 order to the London divines to preach against women dressing in mannish fashions. However, the laws and orders relating to dress reveal no concern about the role of clothing as a signal for gender. While early modern regulation of apparel did scrutinize certain social distinctions, it was *not* an apparatus for policing gender difference.[73] Despite the language of fervent outrage employed by the polemicists, early modern authority did not perceive transvestism as such a danger to the social order.

> The second operation of distinction worked along lines of rank:
>
> But then, Secondly, there is also a distinction of quality to be observed in apparel: God hath placed some in a higher condition than others; and in proportion to their condition, it befits their clothing to be, Gorgeous apparel, our Saviour tells us, *is for kings courts.*[74]

At this point we reach the heart of early modern control of dress. From the 1533 statute onwards, a central message of the legislative preambles is that the abuse of apparel has caused 'the subvercion of good and politike ordre in knowelege and distinccion of people according to their estates, preemynences dignities and degrees'.[75] While referring back to this statute, succeeding Elizabethan proclamations also made clear their hierarchical aims.

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[73] Some scholars have here laboured under a misapprehension. For example, Crawford and Mendelson mistakenly attribute to sumptuary legislation concerns with cross-dressing, see Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson, 'Sexual Identities in Early Modern England', *Gender and History*, 7 (1995), 363-77 (p. 368). Similarly Jean Howard has implied the same, claiming the early modern regulation of dress produced and marked gender difference, see 'Cross-Dressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', in *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing*, ed. by Lesley Ferris (London, 1993), pp. 20-46 (p. 24). In a later version of this essay, however, Howard corrected herself, acknowledging Orgel's contribution, see Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London, 1994), Chapter 5. As Howard indicates, Stephen Orgel has correctly interpreted the apparel laws on this point, see for example *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 96, 98.

[74] Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man*, p. 210.

[75] 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13.

To excessive apparel was due 'the disorder and confusion of the degrees of all estates (wherein always diversity of apparel hath taken place)'.[76] It has caused 'the confusion of degrees of all estates, amongst whom diversity of apparel hath been always a special and laudable mark'.[77] Again, sartorial indulgence has led to 'the confusion also of degrees in all places being great where the meanest are as richly appareled as their betters'.[78] Unsurprisingly by now, along with the economic and moral concerns over excessive apparel, this belief in its 'correct' social usage continued long after the disappearance of the acts and proclamations themselves. Thus, in 1668 the Lords' committee considering 'Sumptuary Laws, and the Fashions of Apparel', were also ordered to bear in mind 'the Distinction of Degrees of Persons by Habits'.[79]

However, even more noteworthy than this overt justification is the structure and content of the actual provisions. All legislation of this sort orders prohibited dress according to status. The Henrician statute that formed the basis of all sumptuary legislation until 1604 starts its provisions with the injunction that:

> No person or persones of whate estate dignitie degree or condicion so ever they be [...] use or were in any manner their apparell [...] any silke of the Collour of Purpure, ne any Clothe of Golde of Tissue, but onely the Kinge, the Quene, the Kinges Moder, the Kinges Children, the Kinges Brethern, and Systers and the Kinges Uncles and Auntes.[80]

Having started at the top of the social and textile hierarchy, the statute goes on to list increasingly inferior ranks and fabrics. Near the bottom of the provisions comes the order that:

> no husband man [...] weare in his hoses any Clothe above the price of the yarde, two Shillinges, or any Clothe in his gowne above the price of foure Shillinges the brode yard [...] nor in his doublett any other thing than is wrought within this Realme, fustian and canvas onely excepted, nor any

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[76] Proclamation 12 February 1566 (542). Here 'diversity' means a quality of difference or distinction.

[77] Proclamation 13 February 1588 (697).

[78] Proclamation 6 July 1597 (786).

[79] *LJ*, XII, 228.

[80] 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13.

manner of furre in any his appareill.[81]

Alan Hunt, a legal scholar who has addressed sumptuary laws as legislative projects of governance, has called this ranking of social status 'appearential ordering'. In the increasingly urban and mobile societies of early modern Europe there was a perceived need to bring social appearance under control. In the anonymity of high population density and less rigid class boundaries, early modern law-makers saw a threat to established order. The response was an attempt to fix individual identity, and make social appearance and social role conterminous. Given the dramatic changes to English social structure in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - with movement between social groups becoming increasingly easy and common, and the growth in the proportion of those belonging to the upper orders - this is certainly a powerful explanation for the energetic dress control of the period.[82] As one scholar has written, 'the various Tudor sumptuary laws attempted to freeze into place the signs that established status and social identity'.[83]

The social milieu productive of a desire for appearential ordering is consistent with that which has been described as necessary for the development of fashionable dress. The classical definition of fashion describes it as a vestimentary system characterized by change. Far from being historically universal, it seems to be a phenomenon peculiar to Europe from about the fourteenth century onwards.[84] One explanation for the systemic

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Works that present social mobility as a structural feature of early modern society are: Lawrence Stone, 'Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700', *Past and Present*, 33 (1966), 16-55; Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), esp. Chapter 1, pp. 17-38; Keith Wrightson, 'The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches', in *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, ed. by Lloyd Bonfield, Richard Smith and Keith Wrightson (Oxford, 1986), pp.177-202; C.G.A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1984), I, esp. Chapter 5, pp. 142-64. In the first chapter of his book *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 1-31, Frank Whigham also describes the nature of early modern social change.

[83] William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca, 1996), p. 5.

[84] Recently there have been revisionist moves to redefine fashion, in order to wrest it from the historical grasp of Western capitalism. For example, Valerie Steele, in the inaugural editorial of the quarterly *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress and Body Culture*, 1, no.1 (1997), p. 1 describes fashion as 'the cultural construction of the embodied identity'. Clearly such a definition has universal application, covering practices as diverse as Chinese footbinding, and the showing of seasonal collections by the great couturiers. Valuable as such a redefinition is, it nevertheless obscures a qualitative difference between cultures in the historical habits of elite dress. Certainly change is to be found in the vestimentary systems of every culture, see Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 42-43, but it seems that European society from the late medieval period was unique in that the primary characteristic of its clothing code was successive but unitary stylistic development. In the latter part of the

nature of fashionable change derives from the theories of Thorstein Veblen, who analysed dress as an expression of pecuniary culture.[85] To summarize his argument, the leisure class wear clothing that, motivated by the canons of conspicuous waste and leisure, demonstrates their privileged status. According to the principle of Conspicuous Waste fashionable garments are rich and sumptuous; according to the principle of Conspicuous Leisure their design is in some way unsuitable for work activity. Thus, Veblen announces, the leisure class neatly display their wealth and their exemption from labour. However, motivated by competitiveness, those from below seek to emulate the upper classes. In turn the upper classes, finding their sartorial customs copied, introduce a vestimentary change. Thus the fashion cycle turns, and in a society in which a rising middle class challenges the dominance of the group above, turns perpetually.

The trickle-down theory, then, explains fashion as the joint expression of status aspiration and status assertion. While the early modern apparel orders are informed by a number of economic and moral concerns, their desire to have people dressed 'correctly' according to their degree, is a response to Veblen's emulative struggle. While we might term it 'keeping up with the Joneses', in a sixteenth-century anecdote the antiquarian, William Camden (1551-1623), called it a 'proud humour [...] to be of the Gentlemen's cut'.[86] During the reign of Henry VIII, Sir Philip Calthrop bought some fine 'French tawney Cloth', and sent it to the tailor to be made into a gown. John Drakes, the town shoemaker, visiting the same tailor saw Calthrop's fabric. Liking it well he 'caused the Taylour to buy him as much of the same cloth and price to the same intent, and further bad him to make it of the same fashion that the Knight would have his made of'. Calthrop, returning to the tailor's for a fitting, saw Drakes's fabric lying ready and asked whose it was. 'Quoth the Taylour, It is John Drake's [*sic*], who will have it made of the self same fashion that yours is made of.' At this point Sir Philip ordered the tailor to slash his gown 'as full of cuts as the sheers can make it'. This ruse to depress pretensions was more

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twentieth century the unitary fashion cycle appears to have splintered into a qualitatively different phenomenon characterized by pluralism, see Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago, 1992), esp. pp. 157-58, 187-88.

[85] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1899). For an investigation which complicates the model of social emulation, see Patricia Allerston, 'Clothing and Early Modern Venetian Society', *Continuity and Change*, special issue on clothing and social inequality, 15 (2000), 367-90.

[86] William Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain* (London, 1870), p. 219. All the following quotations are from pp. 219-20. This text was first published in Latin as *Britannia sive florentissimorum regnorum Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae...* (1586).

effective than any act of apparel. The hapless John Drakes, when he finally saw his own gown in ribbons, cried that 'I will never wear Gentleman's fashion again'.

It seems then that state regulation of dress in England developed alongside the growth of elite fashion, both of them arising out of a particular social context. Indeed, close attention to the apparel orders reveals a developing awareness of fashion as a general phenomenon. The statute of 1463 was the first in which the general terms of the early modern ordinances was established. Excessive dress had become the focus of censure and the familiar moral and economic arguments invoked. 1463 also saw the first mention of a specific style, for no one under the estate of gentleman was to wear 'any gown, jacket, or coat, unless it be of such length that the same may cover his privy members and buttocks'.[87] In 1562 a proclamation protested at 'the use of the monstrous and outrageous greatness of hose, crept alate into the realm'.[88] The next year, and again in 1571, bills were brought to parliament for the punishment of such as shall make or wear great hosen. The proclamation of 1562 also disapproved of 'the outrageous double ruffs which now of late are crept in'. Eighteen years later the complaint against ruffs continued, but this time was joined by a stricture against cloaks. Together, these items of dress were the focus of a separate section of the proclamation of 1580. This time a point of origin for the offending fashion was identified, albeit one that is difficult to reconcile with the proclamation that was issued eighteen years previously. Excessive cloaks and ruffs are both castigated as a 'monstrous manner of attiring' that 'had not been used before two years past'.[89]

The terms in which these complaints about fashionable dress were cast reveal two underlying cultural concerns: the distrust of novelty, and a fear of deformity. Firstly, this manner of attiring had 'not been used before two years past' - in other words, it was new and it represented change. In her study of clothing regulation in England, Frances Baldwin briefly advanced the proposition that one motivating factor was simply conservatism and dislike of novel styles.[90] As far as it goes this may have been true, for throughout the centuries representatives of the established order have looked askance at new, 'shocking' modes and methods of wear. A structuring element in the process of fashion, resistance -

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[87] 3 Edw. IV, c. 5.

[88] Proclamation 493 (1562).

[89] Proclamation 646 (1580).

[90] Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation*, p. 10.

and sometimes outrage - accompany the introduction of a new style. Moreover, it is this initial resistance which defines novelty, for it signals a break with that which has gone before. In Elizabethan society, however, change could have more serious implications. In a world created by an Unmoved Mover, inconstancy only entered after the Fall. Representing sin and decay, 'the euer-whirling wheele / Of *Change*' governed a world spinning further and further from God's purpose. As Spenser wrote of mutability:

> Ne shee the lawes of Nature onely brake,
> But eke of Iustice, and of Policie;
> And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
> And death for life exchanged foolishlie:
> Since which, all liuing wights haue learn'd to die,
> And all this world is woxen daily worse.
> O pittious worke of MVTABILITIE!'[91]

The place of origin for these new, offending styles was always sited at a distance. They were foreign and 'other'; they had but 'crept alate into the realm'. Crediting - or blaming - foreigners for the invention of fashion fitted very neatly with mercantilist fears of the loss of domestic wealth. Luxury items of dress, for which good English currency was exchanged, come from overseas. For evidence of this one had only to look at the names of the newfangled devices: Spanish farthingales, Venetian hose, Dutch slops, French hoods. Of course, by implication the morally suspect inventiveness of foreigners was matched by an equal moral laxity on the part of the English. Foreign fashions only entered the realm because, so every commentator maintained, the English were slavish copiers of trifling frivolity. For Phillip Stubbes in 1583, 'no People in the World is so curiouse in new fangles, as they of Aligna be'.[92] In 1593 Nashe apostrophized: '*England*, the Players stage of gorgeous attyre, the Ape of all Nations superfluities, the continuall Masquer in outlandish habilements'.[93] Fifty-five years later Henry Peacham was still engaged with the theme: 'I have much wondered why our English above other nations should so much dote upon new fashions, but more I wonder at our want of wit that we cannot invent them

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[91] Edmund Spenser, *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*, Stanzas 1, 6 (1609), in Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 2 vols, facsimile edn (London, 1976), II.

[92] Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, The English Experience, 489 (London, 1583; repr. Amsterdam, 1972), sig. C^{r}.

[93] Thomas Nashe, *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (London, 1593; repr. Menston, 1970), fol. 73^{v}.

ourselves'.[94]

The second fear which the prospect of newly styled ruffs and hose awoke, was the spectre of deformity. These outrageously large garments were a 'monstrous manner of attiring' which altered the body's 'true' and God-given shape. The early modern horror at (and almost prurient interest in) deformity, was the counter-image of the pursuit of moderation. Entering Western culture with classical writers, the ethic of moderation and proportion was a touchstone of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinking.[95] The definition of physical beauty, proportion was also the rule of virtuous living; and in a period in which there was held to be a sympathy between physical and moral qualities, the one reinforced the other. For, 'The Affections of the Mind are made known by nothing so well, as by the Body'.[96] Conversely the same held true for the body and soul deformed. 'Well did *Aristotle* [...] call sinnes Monsters of nature, for as there is no Monster ordinarily reputed, but is a swelling or excesse of forme, so is there no sinne but is a swelling or rebelling against God.'[97] Naturally it was easy to forge a link between deformity and clothing, for not content with God's workmanship, the fashionable dresser 'hast cõtended, to bee a more beautifull Creator and repolisher of thy selfe, then hee'.[98] Thus, in a neatly circular model excessive clothing deformed the body, which in turn indicated spiritual malaise, which unhealthily hankered after excessive clothing. For the puritanical Stubbes, fashionable apparel actually dehumanized the wearer: 'For most of our nouell Inuentions and new fangled fashions, rather deforme vs then adorne vs: disguise vs, then become vs: makyng vs rather, to resemble sauavge Beastes and stearne Monsters, then continent, sober and chaste Christians'.[99] While undoubtedly a powerful metaphor, at its most extreme early modern thought literalized the link between fashion and monstrosity. In 1617 William

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[94] Henry Peacham, *The Truth of our Times* (1638), in Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman and Other Works*, ed. by Virgil Heltzel (Ithaca, 1962), pp. 201-02.

[95] Jean-Claude Schmitt briefly traces the history of this concept with reference to gesture in 'The Ethics of Gesture', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. by Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, 3 vols (New York, 1989), II, 128-47.

[96] I. H. Æ., 'The Mirrour of Worldly Fame' (1603), in *Harleian Miscellany*, VIII, 31-46 (p. 39).

[97] Nashe, *Christs Teares*, fols 40^{r}-40^{v}.

[98] Ibid., fol. 75^{r}.

[99] Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, sig. [B7^{v}].

Jones, in warning his readers, related the tale of a pregnant woman given to wearing ruffs. Afterwards she gave birth to a child with 'a peece of flesh of two fingers thicke round about, the flesh being wonderfully curled like a Gentlewomans attire'.[100] Also from James I's reign comes a ballad entitled 'Pride's Fall', another cautionary tale. The narrator's whole passion and desire is for fine clothing but to her horror, when brought to bed of a child, 'my swelling womb / Yielded up nature's due, / Such a strange monster then, / Surely man never knew'. The baby had two elegantly painted and coiffured heads, held in its hand a mirror, had feet decorated with pinking and roses like fancy shoes, and about its neck flaunted a ruff. In short, 'From the head to the foot, / Monster-like was it born, / Every part had the shape / Of fashions daily worn'.[101]

However, despite physical and moral drawbacks the blandishments of fashion were too seductive, and the apparel proclamations acknowledged the inevitability of change and innovation in dress. While summarizing and repeating the 1533 statute, three of the Elizabethan regulations admitted that some of the original provisions had become inappropriate due to the passage of time. Therefore her Majesty:

> hath not only added by these presents such favorable tolerations and qualifications to such points of the former laws now standing in force as by alteration of time may seem in some part hard to be exactly observed, but also hath commanded the due execution of those parts of those laws that be most

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[100] William Jones, *A Wonder woorth the reading*.... (1617), quoted in M.A. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England 1476-1622* (Philadelphia, 1929), p. 155. Jones's text is also quoted in Neil Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London, 1980), p. 50. Shaaber also cites two similar works: *The true Discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes, borne in..Micheham...Surrey* (1566), and *An admonition to all women to see the iust Judgement of God for the punishement of pride purtraied in a wonderfull child* (1587). Alastair Bellany relates an earlier birth of a ruff monster from 1562 in 'Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 58 (1996), 179-210. A further case from 1562 is cited by Norman Jones in *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 42-47. For a discussion of monstrous births, including a list of published cases, see David Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford, 2000), Chapter 2, pp. 29-50. Early modern Europe's fascination with monstrosity is the subject of an article by Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, 'Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France and England', *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), 20-54; and also a chapter of their book, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York, 1998), pp. 173-214.

[101] 'Pride's Fall: Or a Warning for all English Women by the Example of a Strange Monster lately Born in Germany, by a Merchant's Proud Wife, at Geneva', in *Satirical Songs and Poems on Costume*, ed. by Frederick Fairholt, Percy Society, Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages, 27 (London, 1849), pp. 106-114.

agreeable to this time and easy and necessary to be observed.[102]

Moreover, sartorial change was not merely a consequence of the passing of time, but could be introduced by such individuals as 'devise any new kind or form of apparel'.[103] The proclamation was quick to point out that if the new fashion was 'at greater charge than appertaineth to his degree' then the offender would be in contempt of the law 'as if the said garment or garnishes had been especially prohibited'.[104] However, if the change was appropriate to an individual's rank then a certain licence of innovation was permissible. 'And if any person should be disposed for his ability to cut and garnish the outside of his hose with anything that he may lawfully wear, for the plucking out betwixt the panes and cuts, he shall be so suffered to do.'[105] Whether flouting the laws or remaining within them, it seems that by the end of Elizabeth's reign changing fashionable dress was an accepted - though not necessarily desirable - inevitability.

Far from being perverse or unreasonable, then, the Tudor apparel orders were a response to underlying concerns about economic hardship, social dysfunction and immorality. In passing such laws, early modern government hoped to right the balance of trade and sustain home industry, and simultaneously keep society well ordered and the streets safe to walk. Moreover, by asserting a visual control over its members the community at large might be protected from duplicitous individuals who seemed - or dressed - to be other than they were. Returning for a moment to the hapless attorney Kinge, his 'guilt rapier' and 'extreame greate ruffes' did not merely represent sartorial misjudgement. Rather they raised before the Privy Council the spectre of poverty, lawlessness, monstrosity and social chaos. This was a spectre that continued to haunt early modern consciousness long after the apparel orders disappeared from the statute books. The rescinding of the laws did not arise from a change in beliefs - for these were reiterated with each successive attempt to renew sumptuary legislation - but was an 'accidental' outcome of political manoeuvring. The 1604 repeal imposed an artificial closure to dress regulation.

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[102] Proclamation 13 February 1588 (697). Similar provisions are found in Proclamation 15 June 1574 (601) and Proclamation 6 July 1597 (786).

[103] Proclamation 12 February 1580 (646).

[104] Ibid.

[105] Proclamation 12 February 1566 (542).

Having said that the economic, social and moral structures of thought which gave rise to the acts of apparel continued, the unavoidable question must be why further legislation was not enacted? The regulation of dress seems to have been in the unusual position of being universally approved of, but never committed to. Support for bills of apparel, at various times, was voiced right across the political and religious spectrum.[106] Although there is not enough evidence to follow the debate and course of proposed measures in any detail, the identity of the principal movers is generally recorded. Thus the impetus for the Elizabethan bills of apparel seemed to have come from the Privy Council. For example, the sumptuary bill introduced in 1566 was drafted by John Southcott, Judge of the Queen's Bench, on orders from the Council in which Cecil was particularly influential. It was first entered into the Commons, but twice redrafted there by committees chaired by Privy Councillors.[107] In contrast, the apparel measures of the early Stuart parliaments were often given support by godly individuals of a Puritan persuasion. Thus as already noted bills against apparel in 1610, 1614 and 1621, although all introduced first into the Lords, were tendered to the Commons with accompanying speeches by Christopher Brooke. Others of godly leanings who participated in committees touching these bills (and another of 1626) included Sir Nathanial Bacon, Nicholas Fuller, Sir Thomas Hoby and Sir George More. (It was this last individual whose daughter, as we saw in the previous chapter, never wore silk for her own pleasure.) This is not to say that sumptuary legislation at this time appealed only to a Puritan morality, for the Caroline bills of apparel that appeared concurrently with the parliamentary fasts had the support of some, at least, of the Bishops. These included the bishops of Bath and Wells, and Salisbury, who in 1625 had preached to the Lords against excess of riot and apparel. Moreover, if the success of sumptuary measures had been simply dependent on Puritan beliefs, then one would expect the government of the Interregnum to have taken active steps to control dress.

New apparel laws were not passed in the seventeenth century for the same reason that had prevented their passage in the second half of the sixteenth: internal dissension in Parliament. While both Houses and crown shared the belief in the desirability of apparel reform, disagreement as to how to implement this stymied every move. The idea was not

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[106] On the similarity of beliefs about apparel amongst Anglicans, Puritans and Catholics, see Richard Greaves, *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis, 1981), pp. 502-20.

[107] Elton, *Parliament of England*, p. 70. Although this bill ultimately foundered in the Commons this was not an inevitability, since other proposed measures were to meet this end in the upper house.

controversial, but its practical application was. Joan Kent has investigated the attitude of the Commons to the regulation of personal conduct, including in this area of dress control.[108] She has concluded that, due to moral, social and economic reasons, support for such measures was a majority matter. However, although generating widespread approval, Kent also found that such legislation generated dissension for two main reasons. Firstly, Parliament could not agree as to how the social hierarchy should be represented in legislation. To whom should ordinances apply, and what limitations should be imposed on which social groups? Secondly, there was a distrust of the enforcement of such laws and the powers it would invest in minor officials to judge their superiors. Kent concludes that:

> If any one concern dominated the attitudes of the members of the Elizabethan and early Stuart house of commons to the regulation of social conduct, it was the fear that they would be deprived of the authority and privileges commensurate with their social position and that their own conduct might thus be subject to regulation.[109]

Thus conflict of interest within Parliament contributed greatly to the stalemate position of dress regulation, for limiting access to apparel meant limiting the aspirations of their own social groups. This was not a conflict limited to the gentry of the lower house. An illustrative example can be found in the text of two surviving bills from 1604. The first was written by the Commons, and prohibited to all but the royal family:

> Clothe of goulde, Clothe of Tyssue, or Clothe of sylver, or any maner of Sylke, or stuffe flourished, myxt or striped, with anye goulde, or silver, or any maner of goulde or silver lace, or myxt with goulde or silver, or any maner of Imbroderie with goulde, silver, or perle, or myxt with goulde, silver or perle.[110]

The Lords refused this bill and in its stead supplied a new one. The replacement measure concerned the same categories of cloth, but this time disallowed their use to anyone 'under the degree of a Baron of Parlament, or the wife of a Baron of Parlament'.[111]

This change to the bill was not necessarily a simple victory of self-interest over social good. It is quite possible genuinely to approve of something in theory, and yet baulk at its

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[108] Kent, 'Attitudes of the House of Commons', pp. 41-65.

[109] Ibid., p. 62.

[110] *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords*, new ser. (London,1962), 11, p. 70.

[111] Ibid., p. 73.

real life ramifications. However, by the mid-seventeenth century there is some evidence that this notion of dress control as theory preferred to practice had come to dominate. At the opening of the Short Parliament in 1640, the Commons Journal reports that 'there was, for Form, as has been usual in other Parliaments, read, an Act concerning Apparel'.[112] This tantalizingly brief mention indicates that the memory of dress legislation was being utilized as a statement of desired intent - a symbolic reference to a better past time when only gentlemen dressed as gentlemen, and everyone kept their place. These intimations of nostalgia are concordant with the conservatism inherent in dress laws, and also the perpetual reiteration that the greatest abuse of apparel is sited in the present.[113] However, it also suggests that some parliamentary members had come to accept that apparel control was impossible to introduce and implement. It was, after all, forty-three years since the last Elizabethan apparel proclamation, and thirty-six years since the laws' repeal - for some a distant memory, for others, no doubt, a hazy time of two monarchs ago belonging to another age. We have seen that the government, slower than mercantilist theory to adopt unlimited consumption as economically desirable, continued its protectionist regulation of dress and textiles well into the eighteenth century. From halfway through the seventeenth, however, the social and moral motivations had lost impetus, and the policing of personal appearance was a dead letter. Although sartorial presumption among the lower classes was a deplorable and continuing offence, mainstream opinion no longer viewed apparel laws as a serious - or perhaps acceptable - way of combatting it. It is noteworthy that in the climate of moral reformation that dominated the 1690s, commentary on clothing is significant in its absence. One hundred years earlier such alarms at immorality and social disorder would have sounded, amongst other things, against vices of dress. Even amidst a widespread critique of luxury, by the close of the seventeenth century the profanity, lewdness, and drunkenness of the population were considered the appropriate target of civil regulation, but not their appearance.[114]

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[112] *CJ*, II, 3.

[113] On the nostalgia and conservatism of sumptuary laws see Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, pp. 132-33, 329.

[114] For an introduction to the Godly Reformation see Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford, 1999), Chapter 6, pp. 195-209; *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks 1698-1702*, ed. by D.W. Hayton (Oxford, 1996), pp. xxii-xxxiii; D.W. Hayton, 'Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-Century House of Commons', *Past and Present*, 128 (1990), 48-91. For detail of the types of behaviour targeted by the moral campaign's attempts at social control, see Robert B. Shoemaker, 'Reforming the City: The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1690-1738 ', *Stilling*

Discipline and Display

The acts and proclamations of apparel and the reasoning behind them, however, represent only half the story of dress control. For the fact that such concern surrounded clothing in the first place should alert us to the importance of dress within early modern society, and in particular to the way it was used to gain advantage in spheres of influence. As Hunt has written:

> the use of clothes to indicate power and domination [...] rose to quite extraordinary heights between 1500 and 1600. Unless we bear in mind the intense, almost religious significance that was attached to clothing as the expression of power and thus the aura which they acquired it is not possible to understand the intensity of the concern expressed through sumptuary law with the hierarchic order.[115]

The nature of this symbolic weight is clarified by a closer look at the wording of the apparel orders. It was not sumptuous dress per se that was prohibited, but its display. The rubric of the proclamations did not forbid the owning of rich apparel. Instead the constantly reiterated injunction orders that 'none shall *wear*' [my emphasis]. Excess of apparel was construed as a public offence.[116] In the second part of this chapter, then, we will move in from the contexts to re-interpret the texts themselves, in order to discover just whose display of clothing was under surveillance, and where.

In doing so, it becomes apparent there is a certain disjunction between the overt aims of the orders and their actual provisions. Three of the Elizabethan proclamations state that abuse of apparel is found mostly among 'the meaner sort'.[117] Yet despite this clear identification of the offending sector of society, the proclamations all but ignore the lower orders in their prescriptions. Instead they clarify, summarize and repeat the provisions of 24 Hen. VIII c. 13 for those near the top of the social hierarchy. Anyone interested in more

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the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750, ed. by L. Davison and others (Stroud, 1992), pp. 99-120.

[115] Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, p. 307.

[116] Hunt calls sumptuary abuse a street offence. He makes the point that in the European context the regulation of apparel was often discursively linked with other street offences such as prostitution and begging, see *Governance of the Consuming Passions.*

[117] Proclamation 6 May 1562 (493) and Proclamation 7 May 1562 (494). In Proclamation 12 February 158 (646) the wording is 'the inferior sort'.

detailed information is merely referred to the 1533 statute. This difference between the apparent and actual purpose of the proclamations is expressed in a shifting use of social description.[118] In identifying the 'mean' as sartorial transgressors, the preambles employed the dichotomous language of 'sort'. Utilized by those who identified with authority and with the better half of the equation, this type of description implicitly opposed that which was inferior to that which was not. In the body of the text, however, the proclamations moved to the more formalized language of estate and degree. It is in this register that the dress laws described specific gradations of rank, concentrating - like most social classifications of the period[119] - on the upper orders. Hunt suggests that this discrepancy between overt and actual designs was a rhetorical ploy aimed at creating good will among the real, and more socially elevated, target of the acts.[120] Frank Whigham contends that this is evidence of the boundary between gentry and non-gentry being the main focus of contestation.[121] However, if this was the only site of struggle, it makes the increasingly minute provisions for the nobility redundant. It is more likely that despite a rhetoric castigating the socially inferior, the chief legislative target - and site of sartorial struggle - was located within the upper orders as a whole.

More specifically still, Elizabeth's proclamations of 1574 and 1588 both made reference to the young as being most liable to extravagance in apparel. The former stated that excessive expenditure on clothing had caused 'particularly the wasting and undoing of a great number of *young* gentlemen'.[122] The latter preamble was even more pointed. The Lord Chancellor commanded 'the heads, ancients, and principals of houses of court and Chancery' to see to execution of the order because the 'excess was noted to be more largely of late years spread amongst the youth there than in any other place of England'. Further down, 'the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford, where this infection was

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[118] The following draws heavily on Keith Wrightson's essay ' "Sorts of People" in Tudor and Stuart England', in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 28-51.

[119] See Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 17-38.

[120] Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, p. 315.

[121] Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege*, pp. 161-62.

[122] Proclamation 15 June 1574 (601). My emphasis. Paul Griffiths also identifies contemporary concerns about youth and excessive apparel, discussing in particular guild and corporation attempts to regulate the dress and appearance of apprentices, see *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 222-32.

seen to have made entry amongst the youth', shared the opprobrium.[123]

It is helpful to read this identification of young men and specific sites of infringement in conjunction with Whigham's observations about the universities and Inns of Court. By the latter part of the sixteenth century most of the gentry sons were sent to either or both of these institutions. Attendance was a necessary step for social advancement, and not only because of the formal curriculum. Rather, it offered the means 'to those who sought to achieve for themselves the styled identity specific to the governing class'.[124] In these 'finishing schools' for the court and positions of influence, self-presentation was serious business. The wearing of fine apparel was simultaneously 'proof' of high status and an indicator of aspiration towards it. Young men attended these places of education in part - to put it crudely - to learn how to dress. Cleric and scholar William Harrison, in his survey of contemporary England felt justified in complaining that, 'being for the most part either gentlemen, or rich mens sonnes, they oft bring the vniuersities into much slander, for standing vpon their reputation and libertie, they ruffle and roist it out, exceeding in apparell, and banting riotous companie'.[125]

Although of a somewhat precarious financial standing (left minors by the intestate death of their grandfather in Fleet Prison, and of a father who had failed to stabilize the family finances), the account books of the Newdigate brothers still recorded consistent expenditure on clothing.[126] Kept between the years 1618-1621, the accounts detail the outgoings of John (1600-1642) and his younger brother Richard (1602-1678) while at university, and then the Inns of Court. Among the costs recorded for the months November to January 1620/1 are included, for example, eleven shillings of cambric to make a ruff for John, and a further eight shillings worth for Richard's ruff. Over two pounds was spent on lace for John's suit; and for one or more doublets he bought an ell of scarlet baize worth

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[123] Proclamation 13 February 1588 (697). At Cambridge the university issued apparel orders in 1560, 1578 and 1585. Similar regulations were passed at Oxford in 1564 and 1576, see Hooper, *Tudor Sumptuary Laws*, p. 464. Hooper also states that the Inns of Court and Chancery repeatedly ordered the reformation of apparel, and that these orders were just as repeatedly ignored (p. 447).

[124] Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege*, p. 16. See also *The University in Society*, ed. by Lawrence Stone, 2 vols (London, 1974), I, 3-59; and Wilfred Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts 1590-1640* (London, 1972), esp. Chapter 2.

[125] Raphaell Holinshed, William Harrison and others, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587), pp. 149-50.

[126] 'The Undergraduate Account Book of John and Richard Newdigate, 1618-1621', ed. by Vivienne Larminie, *Camden Miscellany 30*, Camden 4th ser., 39 (London, 1990), pp. 151-52.

five shillings, taffeta worth six shillings eightpence, and black satin to the sum of £1 12*s.* 6*d.* Two shillings and threepence went on whalebone to stiffen it. Meanwhile Richard spent fifteen shillings and one penny on Turkey grosgrain for his doublet; one shilling and sixpence on a hatband; and eight shillings tenpence on lace for his cloak.[127]

Innumerable contemporary texts made very clear the discursive link between aspirant young men and their clothing. Satire scathingly described gallants and roaring boys as vain, shallow youths who owed their standing to the unremunerated skill of their tailor. Thomas Nashe, in *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589), criticized youths who frittered away their patrimony, 'casting that away at a cast at dice, which cost theyr daddes a yeares toyle, spending that in their Veluets, which was rakt vppe in a Russette coate'.[128] In his collection of character sketches published in 1628, John Earle was more cutting still. An idle gallant:

> Is one that was born and shaped for his clothes: and if Adam had not fallen, had lived to no purpose. He gratulates therefore the first sin, and fig leaves that were an occasion of bravery. His first case is his dress, the next his body, and in the uniting of these two lies his soul and its faculties [...] He is one never serious but with his tailor, when he is in conspiracy for the next device.[129]

Nor is this linkage of youth and fine clothing found only within satirical contexts. Religious advice and conduct manuals frequently warned of the sartorial temptations to which young men typically succumbed. Yet despite the censure of such conduct, advice books also stressed the importance for them of appropriate clothing. While eschewing excess, they should dress with propriety and 'comeliness' as befitting their station. James Cleland, the author of *The Institution of a Young Nobleman*, modestly advised that, 'in your garments be proper, cleanely, and honest, weareing your cloathes in a carelesse, yet a comelie forme'.[130] The influential conduct book *Galateo* urged its readers, within the constraints of rank and current fashion, to make the most of their garments and find a personal style:

> Your apparell must be shaped according to the fashion of the time [...] Euery

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[127] Ibid., pp. 223-26.

[128] Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. by R.B. McKerrow, 5 vols (repr. Oxford, 1958), I, 1-49 (p. 33).

[129] John Earle, *Microcosmography or a Piece of the World Discovered in Essays and Characters*, ed. by Harold Osborne (London, n.d.), p. 46.

[130] James Cleland, *The Institution of a Young Nobleman* (1607; repr. Bristol, 1994), p. 215.

> man may applie those fashions, that be in common vse, ye moste to his owne aduantage, that he can [...] But, whatsoeuer it be thou wearest, let it be fit and well made for thy bodie: least thou seme to braue it, in another mans cloathes. But with all, thou must in any case respect thy condition or estate.[131]

Baldissare Castiglione's classic work on courtiership proposed an even more self-conscious manipulation of the dressed image. As we saw in the preceding chapter, a courtier 'ought to determine with him selfe what he will appeare to be, and in such sort as he desireth to be esteemed, so to apparrel himselfe, and make his garments helpe him to bee counted such a one'.[132] Similar considerations, no doubt, lay behind Francis Osborne's advice to his son published nearly a century later. A minor post-holder in both the Stuart and the Commonwealth administrations, his guidelines for material success included: 'Wear your clothes neat, exceeding rather than coming short of others of like fortune, a charge borne out by acceptance wherever you come. Therefore, spare all other ways rather than prove defective in this'.[133] This somewhat contradictory set of ideas regarding 'appropriate' apparelling, indicates the existence of a belief that it was young men particularly who dressed for success/excess.

In so far looking at the provisions of dress legislation we have been considering those who were the target of regulatory activity. However, along with prohibitive injunctions the acts of apparel also listed categories of people exempt from such provisions. As with every other aspect of these laws, the appended provisos grew increasingly minute and complex. Certain categories of licence were expanded, others were newly created, and some slipped from the status of exemption to become the focus of surveillance. What can a look at those people placed at least partially outside the regulatory reach tell us about the early modern desire to control clothing?

The first category of person to which the laws on apparel gave complete licence were ambassadors and those foreign nobles on a short visit to the realm. Clearly the latter were outside the normal bidding for influence and favour - the sort of power brokerage in which

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[131] John Della Casa, *A Treatise of the Maners and Behauiours*, trans. by Robert Paterson, The English Experience, 120 (London, 1576; repr. Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 108-09.

[132] Baldissare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by Sir Thomas Hoby (London, 1928), pp. 117-18.

[133] Francis Osborne, *Advice to a Son* (1656), in *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne*, ed. by Louis B. Wright (Ithaca, 1962), p. 50.

dress played an indeterminate, but nonetheless vital part. The former, as representatives of foreign princes, embodied the status of that monarch and had therefore to dress accordingly. As Thomas Nashe put it: 'If any Noble-man (though neuer so high discended) should come alone to a King or Queene in Embassage, without pompe, without followers, or the apparraile of his state, who woulde receiue him, who woulde credite him, who would not scorne him?'[134] In a symbolism of simultaneous exchange then, the glory of royalty required the ambassadors to clothe richly; the rich clothing in turn conferred glory. The partial exemption for officials and those engaged in duty operated in a similar way. For example, 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13 stated that office holders such as 'Maiers Recorders Aldermen Shireffes Bailliffes electe, and all other hedde Officers of Cities Townes and Boroughes corporate' should not be affected by the current statute, but might wear such apparel as was previously lawful for them. Obviously it was the position and not the individual person for which this dispensation was granted, a dispensation with which even Stubbes agreed:

> The maiestrats also, & Officers in the weale publique, by what tytle soeuer they be called (accordinge to their abylities) may were (if the Prince, or Superintendent do Godly commaund) costlie ornaments and riche attyre, to dignifie their callings, and to demonstrat and shewe forth, the excelency, and worthines of their offices, and functions.[135]

Those who participated in the pageantry that helped define and cement the upper echelons of Tudor society, were also exempt from sartorial prohibition. Clearly if 'any Henche man, Herald, or Purcevaunt at Armes, Mynstrels, Plaier in interludes sightes revels justes turneis bariers solempne Watches or other marciall feates or disguysinges' were denied elaborate dress, then the whole ritual would fail.[136] In all the above cases the utilization of sumptuous dress was necessary to the established order, and not a threat.

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[134] Nashe, *Christs Teares*, fol. 3[r].

[135] Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, sig. C2[r].

[136] 24 Hen. VIII, c. 13. Peter Stallybrass discusses the role of the theatre in the second-hand clothes trade, and how players would wear 'genuine' rather than stage costumes, see 'Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 289-320; and Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing: and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), Chapter 7, pp. 175-206.

The other major area of licence - those engaged in war - provides an unexpected moment of slippage in the official controls on apparel. Although men, particularly in their youth, were the chief target of dress regulation, here is a situation in which their indulgence in this vanity was not only tolerated, but thought appropriate. As Sir Edward Coke argued in the debate concerning the 1628 bill of apparel, 'That the soldier, whose bravery [fine clothing] is his honor, may be excluded', and 'let him be gallant'.[137] In his study of art and war in Renaissance Europe, J.R. Hale spends some time exploring the iconography of the soldier. In Northern European art particularly, the standard image played with flashy dress worn extravagantly. In the absence of uniform, clothing of this sort operated as the young fighter's identifying characteristic, 'and no other costume was regularly portrayed with such care and glee as the deliberately provocative and rakish garb of the soldier.'[138] Early sixteenth-century England's involvement with this image was not expressed through graphic art, but in stylized pageantry - the sort of occasion so famously portrayed at The Field of Cloth of Gold. By Elizabeth's reign such tourneys and 'war theatre' had become highly ritualized - and politicized - sites of display. At the Accession Day tilt of 1590, for example, George Clifford took over from Sir Henry Lee as the Queen's Champion. He was dressed for the occasion as the Knight of Pendragon Castle. An account of the tournament described him as, 'woorthie Cumberland / Thrice noble Earle, aucutred as became / So

Figure 38: George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, *c.*1590, Nicholas Hilliard
Source: Marshall, *Elizabeth I*

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[137] *Proceedings in Parliament 1628*, ed. by Mary Frear Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole and William B. Bidwell, 6 vols (New Haven, 1978), IV, 92, 98.

[138] J.R. Hale, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1990), p. 63.

greate a Warriour and so good a Knight'.[139] In conjunction with a surviving portrait almost certainly depicting his costume for this event, we can glimpse the early modern gallant in his 'marciall disguysinges' (Fig. 38). It is an image in which self-conscious sartorial display is paramount, illustrating the accepted view that 'decent apparell, and fit ornaments of body, do become all military commanders'.[140]

However, it is possible to push the texts further on this matter of who was, and was not, implicated by the acts of apparel. The most obvious point - but virtually overlooked - is that unlike European clothing regulations, the core provisions of the Tudor dress laws applied only to men. The earlier acts of 1337, 1363 and 1463 had all included women under the regulations for their husbands and fathers. The act of 1483 mentioned only the wives of servants and labourers. By dramatic contrast the first Henrician statute (1510) repealed all former acts, and specifically exempted women. When repealed in its turn the overt freedom of women disappeared, however the superseding statutes maintained a tacit exemption. The 1533 law (as also those of 1515 and 1510) expressly ordered that no *man* under any given estate was to wear or use a particular type of fabric. The use of 'man' is not generic, for it contrasts with the one differently worded clause which did mention women. The provision opens with the order that no 'person' is to wear royal textiles except the King and the King's family. The itemized list of royal relations includes the Queen, and the King's mother, sisters and aunts. No other clause mentions women, and no other clause has a gender inclusive preface. Despite the contemporary presence of a moralizing discourse which overwhelmingly associated luxury with the feminine, the laws regulating luxurious dress concerned men.[141] The disjunction of the two positions is considerable. How are we to reconcile the female object of moral debate about luxury with the juridical identification of men as the transgressors? It seems that this targeting of the male must be viewed as an aspect of the regulatory desire to control clothing in the public sphere.

Surprisingly, to date no more detailed explanation has been offered. While it was acceptable in 1926 for Baldwin to surmise that the legislators may have 'come to believe

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[139] George Peele, *Polyhmnia*, in *The Life and Minor Works of George Peele*, ed. by David Horne (New Haven, 1952), p. 232.

[140] William Segar, *Honor Military, and Ciuill, contained in Foure Books* (London, 1602), p. 27 [irregular pagination].

[141] For the historical tendency to equate luxury with femininity see John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollet* (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 43-44.

that it was hopeless to attempt to put a curb on the feminine love of dress', clearly modern historiography requires a different story.[142] Notwithstanding, Stanford Lehmberg presumed that not even a Tudor parliament 'dared interfere with so delicate a subject as feminine fashion'.[143] Harte, equally unhelpful, maintained that the attitude adopted in the apparel laws 'was natural enough in so unquestioningly patriarchal a society'.[144] Hunt comes closer to the issue by suggesting 'it could just have been that it was quite literally men's conspicuous consumption that was conceived of as "the problem" ', but shies away again by continuing, 'there is no direct evidence to support this interpretation'.[145] Hunt was right that there is very little information about the marginal position of women in the English dress laws, but such a striking omission so at odds with wider cultural attitudes can not be glossed over.

As was noted above, the Henrician statute which remained in force from 1533 to 1604 made no general mention of women. There were no provisions for female dress. It seems safe to assert that this was not a legal position resulting from oversight or omission, but on the contrary, deliberate policy. This becomes clearer when the Henrician act is compared to Edward's draft bill of 1552. After setting out the allowed provision for the hierarchical ranking of dress, it stated, 'their wifes may weare that their husbands doe, and so may thair sonnes and daughters, being under their tuition'.[146] This bill was almost certainly identical to the one introduced to Parliament the same year, and this measure did not pass. A further bill, also unsuccessful, had been aired in 1533. In 1554 the Marian act for the reformation of excess apparel did pass. This act regulated the wearing of silk according to rank and income, and along with the 1533 statute it remained in force until 1604. Before it could win passage through the Commons however, three provisoes were added. One of these specifically granted exemption to women, that 'they or any of them might use and weare lawfully, before the making of this Acts'.[147] It is indisputable that for some reason there was a deliberate change made in order to remove women from

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[142] Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation*, p. 116.

[143] Stanford E. Lehmberg, *The Reformation of Parliament 1529-1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 173.

[144] Harte, 'State Control of Dress', p. 143.

[145] Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, p. 309.

[146] *Literary Remains*, ed. by Nichols, II, 497.

[147] 1 & 2 Phil. & Mary, c. 2.

regulation. Hunt was correct in suggesting that it was the sartorial habits of men, and not women, which were considered by the state to be 'the problem'. According to the interpretation I am offering, this means that in the legislative sphere male and female use of dress was in some way deemed to be different. My contention is that this perceived difference did not reside in how clothing was used, but where. The early modern acts of apparel were concerned with the manipulation of dress in public and predominantly male sites of influence: the Inns of Court, the universities, and that most important of spheres where the elite vied for standing, the court.[148] However, in 1574 an Elizabethan proclamation changed the situation entirely. Suddenly, and without explanation, women were included in apparel regulations.[149] Moreover, rather than being merely subsumed under the equivalent male status category as in the Edwardian draft, female dress was given its own separate and itemized schedule. Thereafter all Elizabethan regulation was extended to cover women as well. Why should there have been this dramatic change in policy?

Firstly, Elizabeth's passion for dress was constantly noted by contemporaries and has been commented upon by every succeeding generation. As Thomas Fuller announced looking back a half century later, 'She much affected rich and costly apparel; and if ever jewels had just cause to be proud, it was with her wearing them'.[150] Aside from undoubted personal pleasure, Elizabeth also gained political mileage from her fashionable magnificence. In her construction of the image of queenship, clothing was fundamental (Fig. 39).[151] In putting Elizabeth's personal utilization of dress together with the female composition of her court, we may come close to the agenda of the later dress orders. Discussing the Elizabethan royal household, Pam Wright has concluded that the role of

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[148] On the importance of the court as a political centre, see G.R. Elton, 'Tudor Government: The Points of Contact III. The Court', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 26 (1976), pp. 211-28.

[149] The first intimations of this actually came eight years earlier in the unsuccessful 1566 bill for apparel, which apparently included women in its provisions, see Elton, *Parliament of England*, p. 271.

[150] Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State* (1642), ed. by James Nichols (London, 1841), p. 298.

[151] Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey partly address this in 'Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. by Nigel Llewellyn and Lucy Gent (London, 1990), pp. 11-35.

women was different in the court of a regnant queen.[152] Due to their access to the monarch, the female members of Elizabeth's Privy Chamber had a greater power than would normally be the case. These female courtiers did not take direct part in high politics, but had close contacts with those who did. Their importance in matters of patronage and favour was greatly increased. Simon Adams, in his study of Elizabethan court politics, comes to a very similar conclusion. Furthermore, he cites ambassadorial comments on the prominence of women at diplomatic receptions, and suggests that this might possibly have been a result of the monarch's gender.[153]

Figure 39: Elizabeth I, 'The Armada Portrait', *c.*1588, British School
Source: Marshall, *Elizabeth I*

This is not to say that Elizabeth's reign was the first in which women participated in power brokerage, far from it. For example, Barbara Harris investigated women's involvement in politics and patronage in early Tudor England, and found their goals and behaviour indistinguishable from that of their male counterparts. However, Harris's examples are mostly of women suing for, and dispensing favour, at a physical distance

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[152] Pam Wright, 'A change in direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603', in *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. by David Starkey (London, 1987), pp. 147-72.

[153] Simon Adams, 'Eliza Enthroned? The Court and its Politics', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. by Christopher Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984), pp. 72-74.

from the court through letters and gifts. The numbers of female courtiers, she writes, 'were always small'.[154] Although the female constituency of a regnant Queen's court was also limited, sharing the gender of the monarch they nevertheless had a higher profile. In Mary's brief reign this was tempered by her Catholicism and her joint rule. The one ensured that the influence of faction was curtailed by the importance of religious affiliation; the other limited Mary's sole importance with a King whom 'whenever he so wished [...] was politically the dominant partner'.[155] It is in the Elizabethan court, then, that women were enabled access to the spheres of influence for which men dressed to succeed. It seems likely that competing in the same stakes, they should be subject to the same rules.

This inclusion of the clothing of elite women within the scope of legal surveillance did not occur immediately. Rather it appeared towards the middle years of Elizabeth's reign, in the middle years of her life. Always pronounced, her sensitivity to rivals of all sorts was becoming extreme. By the 1570s her opposition to the marriage of her intimate circle was well known, an attitude that has led subsequent commentators to note her 'vanity' and 'sexual jealousy' almost as often as her penchant for extravagant dress.[156] Self-consciously attired to be the symbolic centre of a predominantly male court, Queen Elizabeth was highly attuned to the political/sartorial threat of a younger generation:

> The Queen hath of late much annoyance from the Lady Mary Howard, one of her ladies-in-waiting [...] The Lady Howard hath offended also in attiring her own person overfinely, which is rather to win my Lord of Essex than of good will to her Mistress. The lady is possessed with a rich border powdered with gold and pearl, and a velvet suit belonging thereto which hath moved many to envy; nor hath it pleased the Queen who thought it exceeded her own. Wherefore the Queen sent privately and got the lady's rich vesture, which she

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[154] Barbara J. Harris, 'Women and Politics in Early Tudor England', *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 259-81 (p. 274).

[155] E.W. Ives, *Faction in Tudor England*, rev. edn (London, 1986), p. 19; Glyn Redworth, ' "Matters Impertinent to Women": Male and Female Monarchy Under Philip and Mary', *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), 597-613 (p. 611).

[156] On the attitude of Elizabeth towards the marriage of her female courtiers see W.J. Tighe, 'Country into Court, Court into Country: John Scudamore of Holme Lacy (c. 1542-1623) and his Circles', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. by Dale Hoak (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157-78 (p. 163). On the subject of Elizabeth's vanity, John Guy even goes so far as to claim that it 'was the one constant force of her reign', see Guy, 'The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I?', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. by John Guy (Cambridge, 1995), p. 3.

put on herself and came among the ladies. The kirtle and border were far too short for her Majesty's height and she asked everyone how they liked her new fancied suit. At length she asked the Lady Mary herself if it was not made too short, and ill-becoming; to which the poor lady did consent. 'Why then,' quoth the Queen, 'if it become not me as being too short, I am minded it shall never become thee as being too fine; so it fitteth neither well.' By this sharp rebuke the Lady Howard is abashed and hath not adorned her herewith sithence.[157]

Perhaps most importantly, this period also saw the emergence of other techniques of political control. In the face of the increasing unlikelihood of Elizabeth marrying, or at least producing heirs, 'political stability and confidence required some definition of the attributes of female monarchy and representation of the focal issues of loyalty'.[158] The iconization of Elizabeth had begun. The strategies of production for the cult of Gloriana are familiar: poetics, pageants and portraiture. No longer appearing in realistic surroundings, Elizabeth starred in such allegorical roles as imperialist ruler, Vestal Virgin, or classical Goddess.[159] The official image was also replicated for the wider public - approved woodcuts and engravings in which Elizabeth was for ever youthful.[160] This, in stark contrast to the edict that made mass produced portraits of the nobility illegal - a strategy for maintaining political dominance through dominance of representation.[161] If, for policy's sake, the presentation of the graphic image was more closely controlled, why should the second half of Elizabeth's reign not also have witnessed an equivalent watch over the sartorial image.

Looking at the inclusions and exclusions of the apparel orders, tells us then about the regulatory project's desire to control the display of clothing in the public realm. In the targeting of young men we can see the importance of dress as a commodity rich in cultural

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[157] G.B. Harrison, *The Elizabethan Journals*, 3 vols, rev. edn (London, 1938), II, 188-89. See also Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, I, 232-34, 361-62.

[158] Christopher Haigh, 'Introduction', in Haigh, *Reign of Elizabeth*, p. 4.

[159] See Belsey and Belsey, 'Icons of Divinity'; Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraiture of Queen Elizabeth I* (London, 1987); Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975); Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford, 1993).

[160] Haigh, 'Introduction', p. 4.

[161] *APC*, 1600, p. 619. See also Leona Rostenberg, *The Minority Press and the English Crown: A Study in Repression 1558-1625* (New York, 1971), p. 83.

capital, manipulated by aspirant youths of the upper orders on the road to advancement. Similarly the exemption of those who, like heralds and soldiers, participated in the theatre of state, brings into focus the way the established order also utilized dress as an expression and assertion of power. The 1574 shift in which women were gathered into the regulatory reach was thus clearly more than a crude equation of femininity with fashion. Instead, linked to the strategies of representation of the aging regnant Queen, it was a ploy in a power struggle waged through court politics. However, one problem remains. If, even in the early Elizabethan parliaments, the control of dress was more approved of in principle than in practice, how effective was this legislation? Were the acts of apparel obeyed and enforced, or were infringements a matter of tacit acceptance? In short, what was the authoritative status of the early modern laws controlling dress?

Doomed to Failure?

It is a truism amongst scholars that sumptuary legislation was not effective.[162] Indeed, as the historiographical comment at the beginning of this chapter suggests, there is a:

> persistent Whiggish presumption that sumptuary law was 'doomed to failure', that is was unenforceable and indeed was not enforced. In the simplest terms the conventional view is that sumptuary laws were essentially silly and deserved to fail, and provide subsequent commentators with a means of feeling superior that today we know better and no longer try to regulate such matters.[163]

However, in fairness to such latter day commentators, many early moderns also remarked on the ineffectiveness of dress controls. As an epigram of Sir John Harington quipped:

> Our zealows preachers that would pride repress
> Complain against Apparrells great excess;
> For though the lawes against yt are express,

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[162] Those who take this view include Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 447; Baldwin, *Sumptuary Law and Personal Regulation*, pp. 167, 238; Sylvia Miller, 'Old English Laws Regulating Dress', *Journal of Home Economics*, 20 (1928), 89-94; Harte, 'State Control of Dress', pp. 143-48. Clifford Bell and Evelyn Ruse, in 'Sumptuary Legislation and English Costume, An Attempt to Assess the Effect of an Act of 1337', *Costume*, 6 (1972), 22-31, conclude of this specific measure that although it was seriously envisaged, there is no evidence remaining to us to suggest that costume was effected. The lone voice claiming that the earlier Elizabethan proclamations on dress were effectively enforced comes from Frederic Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, pp. 161-70.

[163] Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, p. 340.

Each Lady like a Queen herself doth dress,

A merchaunts wife like to a barronness.[164]

Or in the words of Bishop Latimer, one such 'zealous preacher': 'There be lawes made and certaine statutes, how every one in his estate shall be apparelled but God knoweth the statutes are not put in execution'.[165] There are two observations that lie behind the modern dismissal of apparel orders. The first is a marked lack of evidence of enforcement. There are a mere handful of prosecutions in the main series of legal records, and the slightly more numerous mentions in local and minor jurisdictions seem due to the sporadic efforts of committed individuals like Burghley.[166] Even in his case, Hooper has declared that in the latter years the dwindling of his energy was matched by a cessation of the disciplining of apparel offenses by the city corporation and the universities.[167] Hunt concludes that whenever there was occasional enforcement of the orders in England, at best it was 'episodic, irregular and probably unpredictable'.[168] The second observation concerns the wording of the acts and proclamations, and their constant repetition. For in their preambles these orders bemoan the continuing abuse of apparel and the non-compliance of the population in defying earlier laws; and the frequency with which new orders appeared, and

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[164] *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure (New York, 1977), 'Against excess in Womans Apparrell', no. 364, p. 296. Also quoted in Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914* (London, 1996), p. 27.

[165] Quoted in Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 447.

[166] Tracing instances of apparel prosecutions is very confusing: the evidence is piecemeal, enforcement erratic, and the different jurisdictions in which cases might appear, numerous. The vast systematic study required to establish an accurate idea of frequency - or infrequency - has so far defeated historians, but the overwhelming view is that 'it seems unlikely [...] that many people were actually brought before the law courts for wearing fabrics or garments made illegal by the Acts of Apparel or the subsequent Proclamations' (Harte, 'State Control of Dress', p. 147). Youngs's is the one lone voice to the contrary, maintaining that in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign enforcement of the proclamations was frequent and effective. As his evidence he cites cases from the Star Chamber, the Exchequer, the Court of Aldermen, and some presentments made in cities other than London (Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, pp. 163-65). From this he asserts that Elizabethan enforcement was a matter for local officials, and not central courts (p. 162). Be this as it may, given the amount of legislation concerning apparel the number of prosecutions is minimal, and bearing Youngs's evidence in mind Hunt still concludes that 'it looks as if there was indeed little enforcement that resulted in citizens appearing before courts' (Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, p. 343). For the handful of prosecutions that Hooper found (some of which figure among Youngs's cases), see 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', pp. 438-41. In the Essex records F.G. Emmison also noted five apparel charges, see *Elizabethan Life I: Disorder* (Chelmsford, 1970), pp. 30, 33.

[167] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 445.

[168] Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, p. 343.

repeated themselves, contains a tacit admission if failure.[169]

Tempting as it is to accept this at face value, Hunt, from his revisionist position, warns us against such easy assumptions. To think so is to fall into the trap of equating the enforcement of a law with its validity and significance.[170] Bearing this in mind, let us return to the dress laws and consider their main techniques of discipline. Firstly, JPs, sheriffs and other legal officials were empowered, and urged, to administer and enforce the law. Secondly, the offending apparel was to be forfeit to the crown, and in addition a system of fines imposed. Half of this revenue was to go to the state, and the other half either to the enforcing officers, or any informing individual who had brought information against the offender. Thirdly, the laws made clear the responsibility that all those in authority had over their subordinates in this matter. This was particularly true for heads of households, who were enjoined to regulate the clothing of their dependents. In the case of masters turning a blind eye to apparel abuses committed by their servants, then the former were liable for an extra fine. Fourthly, a system of watchers was to be imposed in wards, suburbs, towns and institutions. These 'substantial and well-meaning men' were to survey the dress of the population, and arrest those clothed contrary to the laws.[171] Lastly, tailors and hosiers were to enter into a bond. Subject then to regular searches, if they were discovered supplying abusive styles, they forfeit their money.

From these provisions certain implications are immediately apparent. For a start, most of them rely on there being a widespread knowledge of fabrics and fashion styles among the community at large. To sum up the costume of a servant, neighbour or passerby, and assess it as to value and composition, would necessitate a very particular awareness. Not only for arresting officials would this knowledge be requisite, but also for heads of households, legal officers and informing individuals. This 'dress competence' is matched by the imposition of a system of surveillance, whereby citizens monitored not themselves, but each other.[172] Sumptuary regimes rested on 'a strong sense that one's neighbour's

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[169] Harte, 'State Control of Dress', pp. 147-48; Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation*, p. 167; Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 447.

[170] Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, p. 325.

[171] Proclamation 6 May 1562 (493).

[172] This is not the hierarchical, one-way surveillance envisaged in Foucault's 'Panopticism', but the intersecting gaze of mutual assessment, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979), 'Panopticism', pp. 195-228.

business was one's own'.[173]

Implicit, however, within such overlooking is a problem of status. Given especially that the dress laws were aimed primarily at abuses of apparel in the upper orders, a situation develops in which relatively lowly officials had to challenge, and possibly seize, those of a more elevated rank. Contemporaries were aware of this, and many were unhappy about it. As we have seen, the House of Commons, for example, objected repeatedly to proposed statutes that gave power to any officer 'were he never so inferior', and saw in such provisions a threat to their own privilege. Moreover, this manner of execution, Sir Walter Mildmay objected, would prove 'comberous and quarrellous, and sometymes iniurious'. For officers could easily light on men 'though unknowne to them' yet of sufficient standing to wear 'thoes garmentes as they challenge', and this 'must of necessity breed great contention and strife'.[174] Their concerns about violent altercations ensuing from such a clash of authorities seem to have been well founded, for the Earl of Surrey's brother is reported to have drawn upon the watchers who challenged him for wearing a ruff of excessive dimensions.[175] Similar conflict and jostling lay behind a letter of May 1580 written by the Lord Mayor to the Lord Treasurer. In it he explained that in executing the Queen's proclamation, again against excessive ruffs, 'he had friendly admonished Mr Hewson'. Friendly admonition notwithstanding, Hewson had 'replied in a very contemptuous speech' after which, 'for the credit of his office', the Mayor had felt obliged to take further - and unspecified steps - of enforcement. Unfortunately, this had 'given great offence' to Hewson's father-in-law, the Lord Chief Baron. The Lord Chief Baron had then complained in writing to the Mayor (letter enclosed), and refused to enter the Lord Mayor's house. 'Fearing his displeasure for the rest of his life', the Mayor prayed the Lord Treasurer's intercession on his behalf.[176] In the midst of such tangled and competing lines of influence, regulation of the appearance of the elite was never likely to prove successful. As Roger Ascham sadly remarked:

> I know, som greate and good ones in Courte, were authors, that honest Citizens of London, should watche at euerie gate, to take misordered persones in

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[173] Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, p. 193.

[174] *Proceedings*, ed. by Hartley, I, 455; Kent, 'Attitudes of the House of Commons', pp. 54-55.

[175] Cited in Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, p. 169.

[176] Quoted in Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds, 1988), p. 159.

apparell. I know, that honest Londoners did so: And I sawe, which I sawe than, & reporte now with som greife, that som Courtlie men were offended with these good men of London.[177]

The House of Commons were also uneasy about the honesty of enforcing JPs, worrying at a tendency to corruption and self-interest which led to the unjust prosecution of some cases, and the equally unjust dismissal of others.[178] As early as 1531 Sir Thomas Elyot had argued along similar lines. Speaking of, among other laws, those for 'reducinge apparaile to conuenient moderation and temperance', he asked 'howe many p[ro]clamations thereof haue ben diuulgate / and nat obayed? Howe many cõmissions directed / and nat executed?' For which he blames those in authority who, when they 'beholdeth the transgressor, a seemly personage, also to be his servant, acquaintance, or a gentleman born [...] preferreth the offender's condition or personage before the example of justice, condemning a good and necessary law, for to excuse an offense pernicious and damnable'.[179] In those instances of prosecutions that have come to light, these concerns would seem to have been well founded. Despite the main thrust of the orders being directed against the gentry classes, it was against those of a lower estate that proceedings seem most often to have been taken. Thus Richard Bett, a tailor of Stanford Rivers in Essex, was fined in 1565 for using 'his hose with great slops contrary to the proclamation'. In 1568 three tailors from Great Dunmow, also in Essex, were similarly charged.[180] Again, offending by wearing 'a very monsterous and outraygous greate payre of hose, London servant Richard Walweyn was arrested in 1565.[181] When those of a more elevated status were apprehended, both Hooper and Youngs have noted that they tended to be treated more leniently and that punishments - like garments - were tailored to the offender's rank.[182]

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[177] Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (1570), English Linguistics 1500-1800 Facsimile Reprints, 20 (Menston, 1967), fol. 22[r]. This situation is analogous to that reported by Ian Archer, where gentry and aristocratic patronage of London brothels frustrated the City's campaign against prostitution, see *The Pursuit of Stability*, pp. 231-34.

[178] Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation*, p. 240.

[179] Elyot, *The Governor*, fols 128[r]-128[v].

[180] Emmison, *Disorder*, pp. 30, 33. It is unclear from this whether the tailors were being accused of wearing, or more likely making these garments.

[181] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', pp. 441; also cited by Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, p. 165.

[182] Ibid.

Against the lowly ridicule was often employed, such as in the case of Thomas Bradshaw, a merchant tailor's apprentice. Finding his hose offensive, the court ordered:

> that all the stuffinge & lyninges of one of his said hose shalbe cutt and pulled out presently, and he to be put into his doublett and hose, and so lead home through the streates into his Mrs. House, and there the lyninge and stuffinge of thother to be likewise cutt and pulled out.[183]

In contrast, gentlemen arrested for contravening the apparel laws might merely be ordered under financial penalty to reform.[184]

In addition to these implications of knowledge, surveillance and dispute, the laws embodied internal inconsistencies that gave their provisions a paradoxical nature. Thus the impetus behind the apparel orders came from the court, but so did the power play and social advancement that fuelled escalating dress display. Elizabeth, particularly, was concerned to reform abuses in apparel, but Elizabeth, particularly, was also determined to harness its powerful potential. Although beyond dress regulation herself, the statutes and proclamations also enabled the monarch to suspend the laws for individuals, by giving them either garments or licensing dispensations.[185] The Privy Council's order of 1559 for the reformation of apparel even explicitly excused gentlemen and servants if they wished to wear their unlawful garments 'wythin the gates of the Courte'.[186] This problem of clothing regulation and clothing display emanating from the same centre was, as so much else, recognized by perceptive individuals at the time. Burghley, although committed to reform of apparel abuses, towards the end of his career acknowledged that, 'I doubt much that the length of all these commandments and provisions will hardly be executed abroad until there be some good example in the Court and the city'.[187] Roger Ascham remarked similarly, 'And [...] surelie the misorder of apparell in mean men abroade,' he wrote, 'shall neuer be amended, except the greatest in Courte will order and mend them selues first'.[188]

Likewise the perpetual reiteration of the orders and their provisions acted as a

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[183] Hooper, 'Tudor Sumptuary Laws', p. 441.

[184] Ibid.; Youngs, *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, p. 165.

[185] Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege*, pp. 159-61, 168-69.

[186] *Articles Agreed upon by the Lordes*, STC 7903.

[187] Quoted in Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege*, p. 161.

[188] Ascham, *Scholemaster*, fols 21^{v}-22^{r}.

reminder of prohibition, but also published a recurring catalogues of pleasures. By disallowing certain modes and appearances, the laws also opened up a channel for illicit desire. Like all forbidden fruit, it was the sweeter for being withheld.[189] Montaigne's analysis of sumptuary legislation made just this point. 'As for example, to let none but Princes [...] weare velvets, and clothes of Tissew, and interdict the people to doe it, what is it but to give reputation unto those things, and to encrease their longing to use them?'[190] Advertising alluring sartorial display, acts of apparel end by proliferating the very abuse they sought to curb.[191]

Finally, as witnessed by the unsuccessful parliamentary struggles to pass new sumptuary statutes, supporting dress control in principle did not necessarily equate with approving of it in practice. Indeed, such regulation may have had the passive agreement of most of the population, but almost always as something applied to *others*.[192] For wearing fine clothing can only be unwarranted on someone else; for oneself having rich garments is the tautological proof of deserving them. Thus, in the relativity of sartorial judgement, clothing that is excessive, abusive and flaunting when viewed by the subject, might become comely and appropriate when the object of wear. Along these lines Hunt points out that the paradox at the heart of the sumptuary project, is that although supported by the majority, it was impossible to enforce compliance with its provisions. 'Indeed enforcement always ran the risk of alienating the broad consensus that favoured the existence of such laws.'[193]

Broadly speaking then, dress control in any long term, systematic sense *was* doomed to failure. This was not, though, because it was inherently foolish as an idea, or out of keeping with broader cultural issues or societal consensus. While certain implications in its provisions made compliance problematic, it was the contradictions at the centre of the apparel orders which finally rendered enforcement impossible. But this is not to say that the legal regulation of dress was not effective in different terms. As Hunt suggests, we

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[189] Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, pp. 102-04.

[190] 'Of Sumptuarie Lawes, or Lawes for Moderating of Expences', in *Montaigne's Essays*, ed. by Stewart, I, 301.

[191] This is comparable to the Protestant literature of moral reform, which Lyndal Roper suggests simultaneously represses and sustains interest in those acts identified as sinful, see *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1994).

[192] Hunt, *Governance of Consuming Passions*, p. 328-29.

[193] Ibid., p. 355.

might usefully consider the concept of 'symbolic legislation' here - a body of laws whose existence, rather than whose enforcement, is the significant factor. For these measures successfully articulated a statement of desired intent, expressing therein a governmental and cultural preference for a particular ordering of society. Furthermore, they acknowledged and addressed widespread underlying anxieties, that ranged from moral degradation to social and financial chaos. Perhaps, in meeting these concerns head on, the acts and proclamations of apparel helped alleviate them.[194]

This ability that we have glimpsed clothing had to disturb, or cement, social relationships should not be underestimated. A century after the repeal of the dress laws a disagreement as to the suitableness of raiment still soured relations between Evelyn and his local cleric. The Doctor preached a sermon on 'the pride & Luxury of Apparell' which, as 'there being none in all the Parish [...] but meane people', Evelyn decided 'could be applyed to none save my Wife & Daughter'. Feeling that his family were only dressed as befitted their station, he spoke to the Doctor who took the reproof amiss, and instead fell 'into a very furious passion'. Indeed, Evelyn complained, 'he hardly spake to me of some days, but preach'd the very same Sermon this day'.[195] But clothing could be utilized in ways that did more than just ruffle the surface of community good will. Dress, as the apparel laws attest, could be used to make false claims about status and wealth, and these false claims were felt to be a threat to the status quo. However, the use of apparel to completely misrepresent identity and forge a new persona was even more fundamentally subversive. In the next chapter we will explore this by looking at the practice of disguise.

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[194] Ibid., pp. 355-56.

[195] *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by E.S. de Beer, 6 vols (Oxford, 1955), V, 542, 18 July 1703.

Chapter 5

FALSE BEARDS AND BORROWED BREECHES

On 22 February 1623 John Chamberlain wrote his friend Dudley Carleton a letter full, as usual, of the latest political gossip. He described the departure of Prince Charles on what was to have been a secret trip into Spain, for the purpose of forwarding marriage negotiations with the Infanta. The Prince, the then Marquis of Buckingham and Sir Francis Cottington journeyed to Dover where, joined by some other attendant gentlemen, they sailed to Dieppe.[1] For the heir apparent to go journeying in this manner was felt to be a highly risky business - ' all concurre that yt is a very costly and hasardous experiment'. As Chamberlain added, 'certainly there be daungers enough every way and I can hardly conceave how they should passe thorough Fraunce undiscovered'. In order to further the secrecy of the mission, therefore, Charles, Buckingham and Cottington put on false beards. Unfortunately, their disguise was both inadequate and incompetent, and people began to question their identity. Chamberlain's account can not be bettered: 'But their faire riding coates and false beardes (wherof on fell of at Gravesend) gave suspicion they were no such manner of men'. This almost overset their plans, for having been thus taken for 'suspicious persons' the trio were pursued by official enquiry. They only 'untwined themselves' from this interference by giving 'some secret satisfaction'.[2]

So what was going on in this episode described by Chamberlain? To us the inept clothing and false beards seem like the stuff of bad farce, but was it meant seriously by those involved? If it were, then what kind of understanding of identity must they have had to guide their choice of garb or, more fundamentally, to have enabled them to attempt a disguise in the first place? In other words, was it a 'good' idea, and if so, why? Finally, with their disguise but not their identities exposed, why were these men so questionable that their movements had to be marked and controlled? Until 'suspicion' was allayed by 'satisfaction', what was so transgressive about not being as they seemed?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to explore further certain issues that we

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[1] According to Chamberlain these were Endymion Porter and James Leviston, both Grooms of the Bedchamber; Kirke, a Scot; and Richard Grimes, a servant of Buckingham's. Buckingham was created Duke later that year, on 18 May.

[2] *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McCLure, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), II, 480-81. A further version of these events is recounted by Dudley Carleton, see PRO, SP14/138/51.

have already encountered within the context of sumptuary legislation. In part, the acts and proclamations of apparel gave voice to concerns about identity. More specifically, these measures were, among other things, a legislative attempt to close the gap between the sartorial performance of rank and its actuality: a gap which, so many contemporaries felt, threatened to engulf the certainty of an ordered estate. By legally soldering rank and appearance into a truthfully referential whole, it was hoped that sartorial deceit would have no room for play. A labourer and a husbandman might be known by their garb and, more to the point, so might the different degrees of gentility. But the counterfeiting of appearances in the quest for social mobility was not the only sartorial dislocation to be feared. Despite an apparent desire for a simple transparency of self-presentation, early moderns were acutely aware that 'seeming' might not be the same as 'being'. Clothes had the potential to disguise the wearer, and deceive and mislead the viewer. This disguise and deception was usually suspicious and, it was felt, very often dangerous.

In this chapter I am going to explore the mistrust of sartorial counterfeit within two contexts: that of social exclusion, and of gender. In both parts of this discussion the 'unhinging of apparel from the categories of "truth" ' will be found to be inflected by class.[3] The context in which the masquerading figure appears, and this figure's relation to the mechanisms of power, was of overwhelming importance in deciding the manner in which his or her disguise was read. The more marginal the individual the more disturbing, as we shall see, was their disguise. And the more disturbing the disguise, the more completely was the perpetrator enmeshed in the imputed motivations of deceit and duplicity.

Them and Us

A powerful image of exclusion, and of a dangerous marginal lurking on the fringe of decent society, is represented in the figure of the vagabond or wandering rogue. Roaming beyond normal geographic and social boundaries, the rogue embodied the breakdown of good order. Undo the ties that bound family, household and commonweal, and the rogue emerged in dangerous isolation, potentially criminal, but in essence offending simply by existing. 'Vagrancy is perhaps the classic crime of status, the social crime *par excellence*. Offenders were arrested not because of their actions, but because of

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[3] Barry Taylor, *Vagrant Writing: Social and Semiotic Disorders in the English Renaissance* (London, 1991), p. 65.

their position in society.'[4]

In real life the Tudor and Stuart landscape was to be seen as increasingly peopled by the rootless poor. In one scholar's opinion it 'was one of the most pressing social problems of the age'.[5] The primary social and economic conditions leading to this have been well documented: rapid population increase; long-term inflation; changing patterns of land use and ownership. A.L. Beier states that in the century between 1541 and 1651 the population nearly doubled, and with an annual rise of food prices of four per cent, real wages fell by up to a half. Enclosure of common land and the swallowing of small holdings by larger and more prosperous owners, contributed to the tide of rootless folk. So, too, the decline of feudal retainership and the monastic dissolution released large numbers, previously incorporated into households, to wander in search of a living.[6]

The organizing principle applied to the poor was, in theory, a simple one. They were divided into two main types: the impotent, who through misfortune were unable to maintain themselves; and the sturdy, who since able to get a living must, the logic dictated, be therefore unwilling. While the basic classification between the genuine and sturdy beggar had existed at least since the 1349 Ordinance of Labourers, partly under the influence of humanism a more subtle and compassionate analysis of the poor developed in the sixteenth century.[7] William Harrison, in his description of English society, gives us a typical account:

> With us the poore is commonlie diuided into three sorts, so that some are poore by impotencie, as the fatherlesse child, the aged, blind and lame, and the

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[4] A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London, 1985), p. xxii. See also John Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England* (London, 1971); A.L. Beier, 'Vagrants and the Social Order in Elizabethan England', *Past and Present*, 64 (1974), 3-29; and Paul Slack, 'Vagrants and Vagrancy in England 1598-1664', in *Migration and Society in Early Modern England*, ed. by Peter Clark and David Souden (London, 1987), pp. 49-76.

[5] Beier, *Masterless Men*, p. xix.

[6] Beier, *Masterless Men*, pp. 14-28, esp. pp. 19-22. Beier seems to derive his figures from E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (Cambridge, 1981 and 1989). Steve Rappaport has provided detailed analysis of inflation rates, wages and the price of consumables in Tudor London. Although his figure for the rise in prices still remains high (tripling from 1509 to 1603), he puts the drop in real wages at only twenty-nine per cent, see *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London*, Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time, 7 (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 123-61, esp. 130, 150. On the causes of poverty see, for example, Whitney R.D. Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth 1529-1559* (London, 1970), pp. 108-32.

[7] John L. McMullan, *The Canting Crew: London's Criminal Underworld 1550-1700* (New Brunswick, 1984), pp. 36-37; Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth*, pp. 120-23.

> diseased person that is iudged to be incurable: the second are poore by casualtie, as the wounded souldier, the decaied householder, and the sicke person visited with grieuous and painefull diseases: the third consisteth of thriftlesse poore, as the riotour that hath consumed all, the vagabund that will abide no where, but runneth vp and downe from place to place (as it were seeking worke and finding none), and finallie the roge and strumpet which are not possible to be diuided in sunder, but runne too and fro ouer all the realme.[8]

Having thus created a typology of need, all that remained was to sort individual cases and treat them accordingly. The deserving - that is to say the impotent, or in Harrison's words 'the true poore' - were to be pitied and provided for. By contrast, the undeserving able-bodied and idle were to be punished, for 'punishment is farre meeter for them than liberalitie or almesse'.[9] It can be seen that between these two states, therefore, lay the crucial activity of diagnosis, or the matter of correctly identifying those 'genuinely' in need from those who shammed poverty.

Around the figure of the sturdy beggar was hung the weight of innumerable social ills. Wandering rogues were seen as a 'social danger of unlimited proportions'.[10] Idle, criminal, violent, threatening and subversive, the catalogue of characteristics descended even to the subhuman or bestial. Thomas Dekker colourfully anatomized them as the Ragged Regiment: '*Villianes* they are by birth, *Varlets* by education, *Knaues* by profession, *Beggers* by the Statute, & *Rogues* by Act of Parliament, they are the idle *Drones* of a Countrie, the *Caterpillers* of a Common wealth, and the *Ægyptian* lice of a *Kingdome*'.[11] In a less popular context than Dekker's pamphlet, William Lambarde's judgements were no less rhetorically severe. This Kent JP, in an address to a jury at the Maidstone Sessions of the Peace in 1582, urged that they 'rid our gaol and country of a many of mighty, idle and runagate beggars wherewith we are much pestered, and also to rid and deliver themselves from that evil mind which they carry about with them'. Like a plague visited upon decent folk, the idle 'do continually by heaps and flocks increase upon us',

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[8] Raphaell Holinshed, William Harrison and others, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587), p. 182.

[9] Ibid., p. 183.

[10] Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1988), p. 23.

[11] *The Belman of London* (1608), in *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. by A.B. Grosart, 5 vols (New York, 1963), III, 82.

committing 'horrible uncleanness and other mischiefs'. The metaphorical and literal remedy, said Lambarde, was 'to kill and cut off these rotten members that otherwise would bring peril and infection to the whole body of the realm and commonwealth'.[12]

However, despite the strength of the sentiment and virulence of its expression, recent scholars have suggested that the threat the rogue posed to the social order was more imagined that real. Scrutinizing court records reveals a very small proportion of indictments were actually concerned with the crime of wilful vagrancy and rogue begging. 'The inescapable conclusion is that Tudor authorities feared vagrants far out of proportion to their actual menace.'[13] Yet the sturdy beggar had a cultural visibility that belied his or her minimal intrusion into 'real' life. The object of projected fears and anxieties, the rogue loomed large in the mental world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This included an energetic literary portrayal of the wandering criminal. Frequently turning up in dramatic contexts - often as minor figures, like the cutpurse Ezekiel Edgeworth in *Bartholomew Fair*, but sometimes, as with the cheating Autolycus of *The Winter's Tale*, centre stage - rogues also starred in books and pamphlets. The popularity, and presumably the profitability of these texts, can be traced from their rapid succession and multiple reprintings.[14] Gilbert Walker's pamphlet, *A Manifest Detection of Dice Play*, may have had up to three editions published about 1552. This was followed in 1561 by John Awdeley's *The Fraternity of Vagabonds*, and in 1566 by Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors*, both of which went into further editions.[15] While twenty-five rogue pamphlets are extant[16], those by Robert Greene and Thomas Dekker dominate. Greene had five works

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[12] *William Lambarde and Local Government: His 'Ephemeris' and Twenty-Nine Charges to Juries and Commissions*, ed. by Conyers Read (Ithaca, 1962), pp. 168-71.

[13] William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca, 1996), p. 36. See also Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 91-112. Examples of an older, but influential, historiography which accepted early modern complaints about vagrancy at face value are Frank Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds* (Oxford, 1913); and A.V. Judges, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London, 1930). Gāmini Salgādo's more recent edition of rogue literature, *Cony-Catchers and Bawdy Baskets: An Anthology of Elizabethan Low Life* (Harmondsworth, 1972), and his descriptive history *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London, 1977), espouse the same position. For an historian who takes the middle ground, arguing the threat was real but localized and contained, see McMullan, *The Canting Crew.*

[14] Rogue literature was also popular in sixteenth-century Spain, France and Germany. German models in particular influenced the development of the genre in England, see Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds*, pp. 114-19.

[15] For bibliographic information see Salgādo, *Cony-Catchers and Bawdy Baskets*, p. 25.

[16] *Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars: A New Gallery of Tudor and Early Stuart Rogue Literature*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Amherst, MA, 1990), p. 12.

appear over the years 1591-1592, and in 1608 Dekker published *The Bellman of London* and *Lantern and Candlelight*.[17]

Although undoubtedly popular the purpose of criminal literature is less clear, and scholars have interpreted its agenda very differently. Often claiming to be based on real life observation and experience, the texts are yet strongly repetitive, borrowing heavily from one another and elaborating on the template of earlier works. Along with a tone of moral outrage runs a minor strand of glamour and admiration, that valorizes the criminal subject.[18] Similarly, an educative purpose aimed at the public good exists in tandem with populist entertainment and the book trade's need to turn a profit. As Kinney has questioned, how are we 'to take (and to understand) the rogue pamphlets that seem to report and to fictionalize the record [...] Are they, rather, fictive, unreliable, poetic, or cultural constructions?'[19] Like its vagabond subject, the rogue genre has proved difficult to pin down.

Appearing in fiction, the target of rigorous juridical intent and of social reform, the able-bodied beggar thus roamed freely in discursive space.[20] But from where did the dangers attributed to the rogue spring? What made this character so threatening? Primarily, it was because the sturdy beggar was seen as the embodiment of deception, 'by definition a paradox of deceit'.[21] He was able to work yet feigned an inability to do so. He misused

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[17] Robert Greene, *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591); Robert Greene, *the Second Part of Cony-Catching* (1591); Robert Greene, *The third and Last Part of Cony-Carching* (1592); Robert Greene, *A Disputation between a He Cony-Catcher and a She Cony-Catcher* (1592); Robert Greene, *The Black Book's Messenger* (1592).

[18] The positive fictional response to poverty that ran alongside - and sometimes along with - the usual demonization is noted by Carroll. For an exploration of the 'merry beggar' and utopian visions of poverty, see *Fat King, Lean Beggar* esp. pp. 63-69, 208-15. Mark Koch also explores the function of rogue pamphlets, demonstrating their role in changing positive medieval attitudes towards mendicancy, and instead creating an image of the deceitful and undeserving beggar. However, he notes that when in real life begging had been firmly displaced from its position of medieval sanctity, later tracts particularly returned to the figure of the vagabond a certain sympathy and romance, and revived 'some of the mystery in beggary and almsgiving', see Mark Koch, 'The Desanctification of the Beggar in Rogue Pamphlets of the English Renaissance, in *The Work of Dissimilitude*, ed. by D. Allen and R. White (Newark, 1992), pp. 91-104 (p. 101).

[19] *Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars*, ed. by Kinney, pp. 1-2.

[20] For reforming attitudes towards the poor, including the growth of 'social welfare' policies, see W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: A Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations* (New York, 1959); and Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, esp. pp. 113-187, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Cambridge, 1990) and *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998).

[21] Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar*, p. 39.

the signs of apparel to present a ragged self in need and penury. He marked his body to counterfeit piteous disfigurement and disease. Under the cover of this persona of deception, the rogue then crept among decent folk to cheat them of pity and alms, or more seriously, violently to steal prized possessions or life. Counterfeiting was thus inherently suspicious. No honest purpose would disguise itself. One of the earliest of the rogue pamphlets warned, 'the first and original ground of cheating is a counterfeit countenance in all things, a study to seem to be, and not to be in deed [...] the foundation of all those sorts of people is nothing else but mere simulation and bearing in hand'.[22]

The motif of counterfeit and its inherent dishonesty finds an echo in people's personal experiences. In his commonplace book, Sir John Oglander related an anecdote concerning the murder of a neighbour's great grandfather. It being known that he was returning home with money, two of the gentleman's tenants disguised themselves and waited in ambush. 'Being alone, they set upon him, wounded him in many places and one of them imagining him to be dead, would have thrown him to be devoured by his own hogs.' In common with the rogue, these wrongdoers were 'hoping their disguise would have cloaked their villainy'.[23] John Clavell (1601-1643), a reformed highwayman, wrote a verse recantation of his past ways. In it he repeatedly described how inseparable from deception was the criminal life. In a literal vein he ordered the 'Knights of the Road' to:

> First plucke off your visards, hoods, disguise,
> Masks, Muzels, Mufflers, Patches from your eyes,
> Those Beards, those Heads of haire, and that great Wen
> Which is not naturall, that I may ken
> Your faces as they are'.

More metaphorically he then accused:

> That your worthlesse spirits cannot rise
> In any course that walkes without disguise,
> For bred on dunghills, if unmask'd, you feare

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[22] Gilbert Walker, *A Manifest Detection of Dice-Play* (c. 1552), in *Cony-Catchers and Bawdy Baskets*, ed. by Salgādo, p. 40.

[23] *A Royalist's Notebook: The Commonplace Book of Sir John Oglander of Nunwell*, ed. by Francis Bamford (London, 1936), pp. 137-38.

You shall too much in your owne filths appeare.[24]

It can be seen that in Clavell and Oglander's terms, if we are to be safe then disguise must be unmasked and deception recognized. And this point returns us to the taxonomy of the poor for it operated in the same way. Sorting the sturdy from the impotent depended upon correct identification and a skilful reading of the signs. So crucial was this, that much of the discursive treatment of the rogue was concerned with how it might be achieved. For the genre of rogue literature the answer was textual inscription. Within the pages the reader was educated into how the rogue dressed, talked and behaved in order that these techniques of deception could be correctly identified for what they were. The confidence trickster who fleeces the unwary at dice or cards would be 'apparelled like honest civil gentlemen or good fellows with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouths'.[25] By contrast the trickster who begs for alms would tear his clothes and roll in the mire, apply substances to bring up welts on his skin, chew soap that he might foam madly at the mouth, or even feign being dumb. Along with minute details of appearances the pamphlets, borrowing heavily from one another, also reproduced classificatory systems. With pseudo-scientific precision the rogues were sorted into complicated sub-groups, each of them named and explained. Some of the texts even glossed their supposed speech, giving translations of thieves cant to reveal all of the rogue's secrets. Like insect specimens they were labelled and described, pinned to the page by the sharpness of textual observation. As Harman wrote, 'Now, me thinketh, I se how these peuysh, peruerse, and pestile*n*t people begyn to freat, fume, sweare, and stare at this my booke, their lyfe being layd open and aparantly paynted out'.[26]

If in the literary world the answer to correct identification was textual inscription, then the juridical solution was to inscribe the body. Local and national government waged 'a war of signs against the country's vagrants and criminals before the audience of the

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[24] John Clavell, *A Recantation of an Ill Led Life, 1634*, in J.H.P. Pafford, *John Clavell 1601-1643: Highwayman, Author, Lawyer, Doctor* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 6, 8.

[25] Robert Greene, *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591), in *Cony-Catchers and Bawdy Baskets*, ed. by Salgādo, p. 162.

[26] Thomas Harman, *A Caveat or Warening for Commen Cursetors* (1567), in *Awdeley's Fraternitye of Vacabondes, Harman's Caveat etc*, ed. by Edward Viles and F.J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, extra ser., 9 (1869), p. 22.

general populace'.[27] Firstly the *bona fide* needy were badged or licensed, so they could legally beg for charitable aid. Any then found begging in contravention of the terms of their license, or without a license at all, were rightfully deserving of punishment. The penalties were public and corporal. In 1530/1, a statute laid down that any able-bodied person taken in begging or vagrancy be tied naked to the end of a cart, and be whipped throughout the market town 'tyll his Body be blody by reason of such whyppyng'.[28] Five years later more disciplinary measures were added. As a first offence sturdy beggars were whipped. As a second, they were whipped again, and bored through the ear, so that the inscription of their 'true' identity be made permanent. The offender 'shall have the upper parte of the gristell of his right eare clene cutt of, so as it may appere for a p[er]petuall token after that tyme'. Being found guilty of a third offence - so proven by the evidence of his or her previous mutilation - the rogue shall be executed as a felon.[29]

The perceived threat to good order that Tudor lawmakers saw in the rootless poor prompted a further law so severe that it was repealed after less than three years. 1 Edw. VI, c. 3 made legal the branding of vagrants with a 'V', and of their enslavement for the period of two years. Being slaves, the statute said, they could be made to wear an iron neck or leg ring. If the offender ran away, he was 'to be marked on the forhed or the ball of the cheke with an hote Iron with the Signe of an S. that he may be knowen for a loyterer and runneawaye'. He or she, marked with an alphabet of punishment so that all could read their real state, was then to be a slave in perpetuity.[30] Although there is no evidence that this law was ever practised on real bodies,[31] the intent is no different from the statutes that preceded and followed.

In 1572 an Elizabethan measure ordered that vagabonds be whipped grievously and burned through the gristle of the right ear. So the sign could not be missed, the hole was

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[27] Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar*, p. 42. For the stigmatization of the poor and other strategies of marginalization, see Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 158-77.

[28] *SR*, 22 Hen. VIII, c. 12.

[29] *SR*, 27 Hen. VIII, c. 25, (1535-6).

[30] *SR*, 1 Edw. VI, c. 3, 1547.

[31] Beier, *Masterless Men*, p. 159. According to Lambarde, Parliament felt the severity of the law prevented judges and juries from executing it, and so had the measure repealed, see *William Lambarde*, ed. by Read, p. 171. For the background to and the consequences of the statute, see C.S.L. Davies, 'Slavery and Protector Somerset: The Vagrancy Act of 1547', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 19 (1966), 533-49.

to be an inch across, thus 'manifestinge his or her rogyshe kynde of Lyef'. Further offences were to be tried as felonies, with the punishment of death.[32] In force for twenty years it was a prelude, however, to the more dramatic measure that in 1597/8 allowed for the banishment - or transportation - of dangerous rogues 'beyond the Seas'. Rather than marking the offender's body so it would be deciphered correctly, the body was removed from view.[33]

James I's reign saw the return of branding, whereby incorrigible offenders were stamped with an 'R' 'so thoroughlie burned and set on upon the skinne and fleshe, that the R be seene and remaine for a p[er]petuall marke upon such Rogue duringe his or her life'.[34] This measure remained active on the statute books for over a century[35], so that Stephen Martin - a persistent offender in York - in 1649 was branded with R. In the following year John Fitton of Burston in the West Riding, was inflicted with the same punishment.[36] In practice the whipping of the poor was not so very common, and the prosecution of rogues and vagabonds - with the attendant punishments of branding, burning and death - was rare.[37] However, the legal intent is made repeatedly clear, and the attraction of such techniques of unmistakable and permanent identification, meant it lived with potent force in the legal imagination. Justices of the Peace, when taking depositions, examined suspects' bodies for telltale marks.[38] And Thomas Harman, author of the seminal rogue pamphlet *A Caveat* was also a JP, with a self-confessed purpose in writing his identification manual being the education of Justices, sheriffs, and other officers of the

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[32] *SR*, 14 Eliz. I, c. 5, 1572.

[33] *SR*, 39 Eliz. I, c. 4, 1597/8. David Souden has studied the records of indentured servants emigrating from Bristol in the mid-seventeenth century. He has concluded that they were participating in general mobility trends, and were not the rogues and vagabonds that contemporaries labelled them, see ' "Rogues, Whores and Vagabonds"? Indentured servant emigration to North America and the case of mid seventeenth-century Bristol', in *Migration and Society in Early Modern England*, ed. by Peter Clark and David Souden (London, 1987), pp. 150-171.

[34] *SR*, 1 Jac. I, c. 7, 1603-4.

[35] 1 Jac., c. 7 was repealed by 13 Ann, c. 26, 1713. The latter statute, however, retained public whipping and transportation.

[36] YCA, Minutes of the Quarter Sessions of the Peace, F7/259, F7/262. F7/284 notes that in 1650 Matthew Wilson was burned in the hand with a 'T'.

[37] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 91-100.

[38] Beier, *Masterless Men*, p. 160.

law.[39]

Clearly, these attempts to fix the external signs into a pattern of 'truth', arose from a fear of the possible disparity between outer appearance and inner reality, or between being and seeming. The desire to make internal truth visible, is manifest in other sociological phenomena of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The search for damning marks on the bodies of witches, was a strategy for combatting the terror of the threat that can not be recognized. If good and evil look the same, how can we possibly proceed? Diligent search *must* be made to uncover a sign. Catholics, like witches, were also feared because of their secret difference. For did not priests, disguised as normal and harmless folk, enter the realm and 'privily minister poison to our souls'?[40] In 1571 a bill against Popish priests disguised in servingmen's apparel was introduced into Parliament. It passed its three readings in the Commons apparently without dispute, and in the minimal time of two days. Put into committee in the Lords, it was then referred to the Privy Council.[41] Issued twenty years later, an anti-Catholic proclamation of 1591 stated that it was common knowledge and common experience that priests arrived in England 'disguised both in their names and persons'. It proceeded to describe the looks and apparel - 'yea, in all colors and rich feathers' - that might be assumed.[42] This sounds like, and may have been, irrational over-reaction, but the circumstances of falsely apparelled Catholics were real enough. Despite persecution, the years between 1580 and 1641 witnessed the growth of the Catholic community, and the numbers of ministering Jesuits also increased 'dramatically'. Correspondingly, so too did the paranoia about these 'Protean disguisers'.[43] Of course, from the persecuted priest's position it was only sensible to assume a disguise. English Jesuit, John Gerard, recorded his reasons for donning the dress of a moderately wealthy gentleman:

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[39] Harman, *A Caveat*, pp. 20-21.

[40] *William Lambarde*, ed. by Read, p.96.

[41] *CJ*, I, 86, 87. *LJ*, I, 677, 678. See also *CSPD* 1547-80, p. 410. After having been referred to the Privy Council, the bill seems to have disappeared.

[42] Proclamation 18 October 1591, 33 Elizabeth I (738).

[43] Arthur F. Marroti, 'Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies', in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. by Arthur F. Marroti (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 1-34 (pp. 14, 12). On fears of the secrecy of Catholicism see Julian Yates, 'Parasitic Geographies: Manifesting Catholic Identity in Early Modern England', in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism*, ed. by Marotti, pp. 63-84.

> It was thus that I used to go about before I became a Jesuit and I was therefore more at ease in these clothes than I would have been if I had assumed a role that was strange and unfamiliar to me. Besides, I had to move in public and meet many Protestant gentlemen, and I could never have mixed with them and brought them slowly back to love of the faith and a virtuous life had I dressed in any other way.

When arrested he appeared again in his Jesuit cloak and gown. His enemies were, he wrote, 'wild with rage'. ' "Why didn't you go about in these clothes before?" they said. "Instead, you had a disguise and assumed a false name. No decent person behaves like that." '[44]

Disguise was, of course, a particularly vexed issue for Catholic priests, already demonized by Protestant opinion for their 'jesuitical' manipulations of the truth.[45] Nevertheless, viewing this incident through Gerard's words alerts us to an inconsistency in the suspicion that altering appearances engendered. It was, in fact, only untrustworthy in *others*. In oneself it was an allowable move in the game of self-presentation, a possible ploy resorted to when circumstances dictated. Indeed, it was not so much cunning as prudent, for we find individuals writing of their disguised experiences in contexts of caution and danger. In these situations it seems as if the responsible course of action was to don a disguise. Also noteworthy is the frequency with which diarists record this happening. Scholars have long remarked the ubiquity of the topos in early modern drama, but, more surprisingly, it was mirrored in a minor way by off stage practice.[46] Disguise was a cultural tool, a way of thinking that offered practicable solutions, that was at the disposal of dramatists and diarists alike. Furthermore, its real life practice outlasted the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century heyday of stage counterfeit. For example, in the turmoil and uncertainty that preceded the Restoration, as an active member of the Interregnum government Bulstrode Whitelocke found himself liable to imprisonment. He therefore 'thought fitt to absent & conceale himselfe att some friends house'. To make this journey incognito, Whitelocke 'accoutred himselfe with a long grey Coate, & a great Baskethilted

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[44] John Gerard, *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. by Philip Caraman (London, 1951), pp. 17-18, 94.

[45] See Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), esp. pp. 186-220.

[46] For example, Victor Freeburg, *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama: A Study in Stage Tradition* (1915; New York, 1965), and Peter Hyland, *Disguise and Role-Playing in Ben Jonson's Drama* (Salzburg, 1977).

sword'. About two miles out of town he 'rode in att a gate to a close & there under the hedge he putt on a great perwicke, which with his unusuall clothes did much disguise him'. Understandably, from what we have seen of the suspicious nature of another's counterfeiting, this caused consternation for the man waiting on Whitelocke. He 'looked strangely att it, fearing (as he S[ai]d afterwards[)] lest his Master might have some design to robbe'.[47]

Also finding herself in danger, Lady Ann Fanshawe (1625-1680) disguised her identity. Unlike Bulstrode Whitelocke, this entailed masking her gender. She and her diplomat husband were sailing to Spain when they saw 'coming towards us with full saile a Turkish galley well man'd, and we believed we should all be carried away slaves'. Sir Richard, arming himself, bid Lady Ann keep to her cabin to trick the Turks into thinking the ship was a military vessel. For 'if they saw women, they would take us for merchants and boord us'. Although locked in the cabin against her will Lady Ann - who had described herself in youth as 'a hoyting girle' - was made of adventurous stuff. She knocked and called:

> untill at length a cabine boy came and opened the door. I, all in teares, desired him to be so good as to give me his blew throm cap he wore and his tarred coat, which he did, and I gave him half a crown, and putting them on and flinging away my night's clothes, I crept up softly and stood upon the deck by my husband's side.

By this time the two vessels, having taken measure of one another's forces, decided on discreet and mutual retreat. The Turkish 'man-o-war tacked about and we continued on our course'. Sir Richard then turned around and 'looking upon me he blessed himself and snatched me up in his armes, saying, "God God, that love can make this change!" '. Although dangerous and unconventional, both he and Lady Ann appear to have been secretly pleased at the exploit: 'And though he seemingly chid me, he would laugh at it as often as he remembered that voyage'.[48]

Charles II's Boscobel escape after the Battle of Worcester is well documented. He himself narrated to Samuel Pepys his:

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[47] *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, ed. by Ruth Spalding, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 13 (London, 1990), p. 557. 'Perwicke' seems to be a combination of peruke and periwig.

[48] *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. by John Loftis (Oxford, 1979), pp. 127-28.

> resolution of putting myself into a disguise, and endeavouring to get a-foot to London, in a country fellow's habit, with a pair of ordinary gray-cloth breeches, a leathern doublet, and a green jerkin [...] I also cut my hair very short, and flung my clothes into a privy-house, that nobody might see that any body had been stripping themselves.[49]

Less commonly known is the manner of his brother's flight from England three years earlier, clothed as a female. At that point the young Duke of York, then aged fourteen, had been confined under guard to St. James's Palace. Lady Halkett recorded how she helped Colonel Bampfield, a Royalist spy who had access to James, 'gett the Duke's cloaths made and to drese him in his disguise'. Rather than buying or borrowing an outfit, Lady Halkett desired the Colonel 'to take a ribban with him and bring mee the bignese of the Duke's wast and his lengh to have cloaths made fitt for him'. But this concern to have authentic props for their real life piece of theatre was very nearly their undoing:

> When I gave the measure to my tailor to inquire how much mohaire would serve to make a petticoate and wastcoate to a young gentlewoman of that bignese and stature, hee considered it a long time and said hee had made many gownes and suites, butt hee had never made any to such a person in his life. I thought hee was in the right; butt his meaning was, hee had never seene any women of so low a stature have so big a wast. However, hee made itt as exactly fitt as if hee had taken the measure himselfe. It was a mixt mohaire of a light haire couler and blacke, and the under petticoate was scarlett.

James, smuggled away from the Palace by river, was taken to a house where Lady Anne was waiting ready. 'His Highese called, 'Quickly, quickly, drese mee', and putting off his cloaths I dresed him in the wemen's habitt that was prepared, which fitted His Hignese very well and was very pretty in itt'.[50] In this guise James then escaped successfully to the Continent.

If we include Charles I's assumption of the false beard that started this investigation,

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[49] 'An Account of His Majesty's Escape from Worcester: Dictated to Mr Pepys by the King Himself' (1680), in *The Boscobel Tracts*, ed. by J. Hughes, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1857), p. 150.

[50] *Memoirs of Lady* Fanshawe, pp. 24-25. Interestingly, in 1644 Sir Samuel Luke, a Parliamentary commander and Governor of Newport Pagnell, ordered his subordinates to apprehend, among others, the Earls of Lindsey and Peterborough. He advised them to search diligently, and to 'be as careful as you can that no men deceive you in women's habits', see *The Letter Books, 1644-45, of Sir Samuel Luke*, ed. by Harry Gordon Tibbutt, HMC, Joint Publication Ser., 4 (London, 1963), p. 119.

we now have contexts in which three Stuart kings took to disguise as a serious and prudent course of action.[51] According to Sir James Melville, Scottish ambassador to England, he offered the same opportunity to Elizabeth. The Queen, Melville said, had again wished she might see Mary, the Scottish monarch. Melville's response was as follows: 'I offered to convey her secretly to Scotland by post, clothed like a page; that under this disguise she might see the Queen, as James V had gone in disguise to France with his own Ambassador'. According to Melville, Elizabeth's reaction was not one of outrage or disbelief, but more like to wistfulness at unattainable freedoms. 'She appeared to like that kind of language, only answered it with a sigh, saying, Alas! if I might do it thus.' [52]

In order to mask identity and put on the characteristics of another sort of person, there needed to exist a shared understanding of how different social groups acted and appeared. There was a tacit agreement, at least, as to dress, posture, demeanour, voice and speech. It was this communal expectation that enabled Charles II to escape looking like a 'country fellow', and made sense of James Melville's suggestion to Elizabeth that she be 'clothed like a page'. Failure to fulfill such expectations appropriately led to the failure of Charles I's anonymous venture to Spain. An accepted typology of characters embeds many instances of early modern disguise, as James Clavell's description of a highwayman playing a country bumpkin illustrates:

> That one amongst them, who can act it right,
> Shall be appareld like a Country wight,
> Cloathed in russet, or a leatherne slop,
> Which roules of rotten hay shall underprop,
> Meeting his hobnaild shoes halfe way the legg;
> His wastcote buckled with a hathorne pegg;
> His steeple felt, with greasie brims, inch broad.[53]

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[51] Charles I was also disguised in his escape from Oxford in the Civil War. It was mentioned by contemporary diarists, among whom figure Lucy Hutchinson and Ralph Josselin, see *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. by N.H. Keeble (London, 1995), p. 206; and *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-1683*, ed. by Alan Macfarlane, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 3 (London, 1976), p. 59. In 1688 James II again attempted escaping in disguise, but was caught and initially taken for a Jesuit. He wore 'a short black wig [and] a patch on his upper lip on the left side', see John Miller, *James II: A Study in Kingship* (Hove, 1978), p. 206.

[52] *Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill 1535-1617*, ed. by A. Francis Steuart (London, 1929), p. 97.

[53] Pafford, *John Clavell*, p. 28.

Personal manipulations of appearance may have been influenced by the literary genre of character writing. Drawing a brief picture of the generalized characteristics of types, the subject was never an individual, always a universal.[54] It owed its origin to the Greek philosopher Theophrastus (fl. 372 BC), and became familiar in Europe via a 1529 edition of his collected character studies. The first examples in English, however, did not appear until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Perhaps best known of such texts was John Earle's *Microcosmography*, first published in 1628. The contents lists the figures delineated within the body of the book: An Idle Gallant, A Tobacco-Seller, A Constable, and so on. Earle very closely followed the pattern and tone of an earlier text of twenty-one Characters by Sir Thomas Overbury, published posthumously in 1614.[55] Character studies, however, were not limited to such satirical and witty manifestations. Bishop Thomas Fuller, for example, used them in *The Holy State and the Profane State* (1642). From the pages of this text the reader could glean moral instruction from exemplars such as The Good Wife, The Harlot and The Prince or Heir-Apparent to the Crown.[56]

The prevalence of such social typology within literary texts and real life assumptions, suggests that early modern identity was perceived as being both fixed, and role based. For the latter, people primarily understood themselves and others as being described by rank and occupation. One was a gentleman, a servant, a housewife, a monarch. The evidence for this inner identity lay in externalities: the king was the king because he looked, dressed and behaved in a kingly way. Thus, as a working proposition - a useful fiction - a transparency was assumed between outer and inner qualities; between appearance and essence. But, as we have seen, it was also an accepted ploy, or play, to mask this identity through disguise, in which case disrupting the correspondence between external and internal truths. Both propositions, however, relied on the belief that internal identity was permanent and essential. Neither Sir James nor Elizabeth felt that his suggestion to dress her as a page would alter her Queenly nature; it would merely mask it. Similarly Charles

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[54] John Earle, *Microcosmography or a Piece of the World discovered in Essays and Characters*, ed. by Harold Osborne (London, n.d.), pp. xv-xxi. The bibliographic history of Earle's work is complicated, and authorship of parts of expanded later editions is disputed, see Benjamin Boyce, *The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642* (London, 1967), p. 136.

[55] Thomas Overbury, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Sir Thomas Overbury*, ed. by Edward Rimbault (London, 1890).

[56] Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State*, ed. by James Nichols (London, 1841). See also Bishop Joseph Hall, *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, in *The Works of Joseph Hall*, ed. by Joseph Pratt and Peter Hall,12 vols (Oxford, 1837-39), VI, 86-122.

II clearly felt that his Boscobel adventures dressed first as a labourer and then as a servingman, had not compromised his identity as monarch. On the contrary, the events became an important part of the myth of his kingship, and in subsequent years his escape 'became his favourite topic of reminiscence'.[57] In Charles's retelling of the story to Pepys he suggests that disguising was his idea, and in a rather disparaging aside about his companion, Lord Wilmot, Charles implicitly foregrounds his own theatrical resourcefulness. 'I could never get my Lord Wilmot to put on any disguise, he saying that he should look frightfully in it, and therefore did never put any on.'[58]

Disguising, then, did not change identity, it simply altered its appearance. A successful disguise misled the viewer; a failed disguise was one that was 'seen through'. Indeed, it is only within the understanding of identity as fixed, that the notion of disguise has any validity at all. A fixed identity can be played with and its appearance altered without changing, or being a threat to, the underlying substance. For a more fluid and processual understanding of selfhood, such as our society currently holds, the idea of disguise becomes very much more problematic. How can identity be hidden, when the ordinary course of changing events and relationships finds it open to constant revision anyway?

If identity is understood as essential, then disguise is interpreted as a mechanism for changing not the wearer's essence, but the viewer's perceptions. This belief was most frenziedly articulated in anti-theatrical polemic. Although part of an intellectual tradition reaching to classical origins, in England the late sixteenth century saw a resurgence of anti-theatrical debate which, growing in vigour, culminated in the 1642 closure of playhouses.[59] The many polemics produced during this period argued that the whole theatrical experience was one of counterfeit and was therefore untrustworthy, or even Satanic. They also argued that the performance - or the counterfeiting - moved the viewers as if the dramatic enterprise was reality. Through the 'priuie entries' of the eyes and ears the dissembling players beguiled the spectators' senses, leading them to believe that what was

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[57] Richard Ollard, *The Image of the King: Charles I and Charles II* (London, 1979), p. 85.

[58] 'An Account of His Majesty's Escape', in *Boscobel Tracts*, pp. 150, 169.

[59] For a history of the anti-theatrical tradition see Jonas Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley, 1981). For a discussion of the origins and characteristics of the Elizabethan attack specifically, see William Ringler, 'The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage, 1558-1579', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, no. 4 (1942), 391-418.

falsely staged was, in fact, true.[60] John Northbroooke, the writer of one of the earliest of these tracts, warned that watching plays 'you shall learne all things that appertayne to craft, mischiefe, deceytes, and filthinesse'.[61] Five years later Stephen Gosson, playwright turned anti-theatricalist, urged his readers to consider what a lie was:

> a lye is [...] an acte executed where it ought not. This acte is discerned by outward signes, euery man must show him selfe outwardly to be such as in deed he is. Outward signes consist eyther in words or gestures, to declare our selues by wordes or by gestures to be otherwise than we are, is an act executed where it should not, therefore a lye.

Having thus consigned the action of plays to the realm of deceit, he tackled its effect on the audience. 'The diuel is not ignorāt', he warned, 'how mightely these outward spectacles effeminate, & softē ý hearts of mē, vice is learned w[ith] beholding, sēse is tickled, desire pricked, & those impressions of mind are secretly coūueyed ouer to ý gazers, which ý plaiers do coūterfeit on ý stage'.[62]

The anti-theatrical texts, which repeat, expand, and toss among themselves these and other ideas, culminated in William Prynne's extraordinary polemic of 1633, *Histriomastix*. Within the thousand pages of specious argument, spurious reasoning and exhaustingly repetitive detail, Prynne writes of the manner of acting:

> If we seriously consider the very forme of acting Playes, we must needes acknowledge it to be nought else but grosse hypocrisie. All *things are counterfeited, feined, dissembled; nothing really or sincerely acted. Players are alwayes counterfeiting, representing the persons, habits, offices, callings, parts, conditions, speeches, actions, lives,; the passions, the affections, the anger, hatred, cruelty, love, revenge, dissentions; yea, the very vices, sinnes, and lusts; the adulteries, incests, rapes, murthers, tyrannies, thefts, and such like crimes of other men, of other sexes, of other creatures; yea oft-times of the Divell himselfe, and Pagan Divell-gods.* They are alwayes *acting others*, not

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[60] Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), in *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson*, ed. by Arthur Kinney (Salzburg, 1974), p. 89.

[61] John Northbrooke, *A Treatise against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes with Other Idle Pastimes* (1577), ed. by J.P. Collier, The Shakespeare Society, 14 (London, 1843), p. 94.

[62] Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions* (1582), in *Markets of Bawdrie*, ed. by Kinney, pp. 177, 192-3.

themselves: they vent notorious lying fables, as undoubted truthes: they put false glosses upon Histories, persons, virtues, vices, all things they act, representing them in feined colours: the whole action of Playes is nought else but feining, but counterfeiting, but palpable hypocrisie and dissimulation which God, which men abhore: therefore it must needs be sinfull.[63]

This exhaustive listing of the ways players dissemble is reminiscent of the detailed descriptions in rogue literature that forewarned the reader in what ways the sturdy beggar might be disguised. And this brings us to a further overlap between rogue and anti-theatrical discourse. For those that visited theatres were stigmatized as vagrant and masterless, who instead of pursuing legitimate activity - worship or work - idly congregated 'to be frivolously entertained by counterfeiters'.[64] Labelled as vagrants by polemic the audience nevertheless escaped more lightly than the actors they watched. For this group were *legally* defined as masterless rogues and beggars. From 1572 the law classified as sturdy poor all players not licensed by either nobles or JPs. Anyone taken in this capacity was to be punished as a wandering rogue. In 1597/8 the law squeezed tighter, and only players licensed by nobles were recognized as legitimate. Finally, the Jacobean statute of 1603/4 ordered punitive retribution for all players found on the road, irrespective of their being licensed or not. A nobleman's sanction was no longer adequate to protect them from the whippings and brandings that in theory permanently identified the roguish dissembler.[65]

This legal interpretation of actors as social illegitimates who obtained money by dishonest practice, was adopted gleefully by anti-stage writers. From Northbrooke at the start of the movement, to Prynne at the close, most at some point called on the laws of the land to justify their position. Furthermore, they called for the statutes to be enforced and detailed the punishments due. To paraphrase Prynne's lengthily expressed opinion on the matter, all common stage players, by whomsoever licensed, were but vagabonds, rogues, or sturdy beggars who ought to suffer legal pains and punishments in every degree. All magistrates should in this regard enforce the statutes fully, as 'both in law and conscience'

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[63] William Prynne, *Histriomastix* (1633), Garland facsimile edn (New York, 1974), p. 156. Emphasis in the original.

[64] Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London, 1994), p. 27.

[65] *SR*, 14 Eliz. I, c. 5 (1572); 39 Eliz. I, c. 4 (1597-8); 1 Jac. I, c. 7 (1603-4). On the background to and the effects of the measures taken in 1572, see Peter Roberts, 'Elizabethan Players and Minstrels and the Legislation of 1572 Against Retainers and Vagabonds', in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. by Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 29-55.

they were bound to do.[66]

The anti-theatricalists' response, then, to the counterfeiting practices of stage and players, was to call for the abolition of the one, and the 'fixing' of the other - branding and marking the bodies of idle actors so that they could no longer work their tricks of identity. The bitter irony of this is that Prynne, whose vehement espousal of this position was close to pathology, was made to experience - if not accept - the subjective nature of interpretation. His vast tirade against the theatre, which included comments about actresses and courtly entertainments, was taken by the powerful as criticism of Henrietta Maria, royal theatricals, and the state. In 1634 the Privy Council tried Prynne for sedition and libel, and found him guilty. Their Lordships' judgements were more briefly expressed than Prynne's, but no less damning. 'Mr. Pryn maketh himselfe a judge over the Kinge and all the kingdome, devideth his booke into severall actes, the sceene is the world, but there is but one actour, and hee plaieth the devill and the foole.'[67] By the end of his long engagement with the legal process, Prynne had been pilloried, had his ears cropped, and had the letters SL, for seditious libeller, branded on his face. Thus the man who had so desperately wanted to fix the appearance of others, was in turn marked with his 'true' identity.[68]

The reception of Prynne's ill-judged work indicates that, despite its familiar anti-theatrical arguments, it differed in one crucial way from earlier texts: *Histriomastix* attacked the powerful. Jean Howard points out that there was a selectivity about anti-theatrical polemic that aimed only at the margins. It demonized the theatrical practices of subordinate groups, but silently legitimized those of the upper orders.[69] Yet as the Star Chamber proceedings reveal, the Court was most concerned with the book's slurs on the Queen and King, and the mechanisms of government. Sir John Finch voiced the opinions

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[66] Prynne, *Histriomastix*, pp. 496-7. Ringler downplays the significance of these laws, pointing out that their focus was on the wandering poor, and not actors *per se*, see 'The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack', pp. 393-94. However, regardless of the intention of the authorities, anti-stage writers certainly made rhetorical mileage out of the relevant clauses.

[67] *Documents Relating to the Proceedings Against William Prynne, in 1634 and 1637*, ed. by S.R. Gardiner, Camden Society, new ser., 18 (1877), p. 28.

[68] For a sketch of Prynne's career, particularly its theatricality, see David Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford, 2000), Chapter 13, pp. 213-33. For a fuller treatment, see William M. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne 1600-1669* (London, 1963).

[69] Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 16 and Chapter 2, pp. 22-46.

of all his colleagues when he reminded them, they had 'heard this monster of men and nature spitt his venome against the people in generall, the magistrates, and his Ma^tie^s howse and household, they shall nowe see him spitt his venome att the throane it selfe'.[70] Of course, the 'people in general' counted for nothing. What mattered was Prynne's daring to castigate the elite.

There were, however, self-dramatizing strategies which not even the outspoken Prynne identified. These strategies were fundamental to the dominant and rising groups, for whom the road to self-advancement lay through favour and patronage, and the entrée to spheres of influence was affected by personal presentation. The gentleman courtier, then, could be said to have consciously adopted models of behaviour in much the same way as the disguised beggar. The rules of comportment for the former, however, were socially acceptable and codified not in rogue literature, but in conduct books.[71] As Stephen Greenblatt has written in his seminal *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*:

> Theatricality, in the sense both of disguise and histrionic self-presentation, arose from conditions common to almost all Renaissance courts: a group of men and women alienated from the customary roles and revolving uneasily around a centre of power, a constant struggle for recognition and attention, and a virtually fetishistic emphasis on manner. The manuals of court behavior which became popular in the sixteenth century are essentially handbooks for actors, practical guides for a society whose members were nearly always on stage.[72]

Nor was this dramatizing confined to court circles, for Anna Bryson has noted that in London at large, and even in rural locations, gentlemen were pressured to 'validate their status with social behaviour informed by the theatricality' laid out within the pages of advice literature.[73]

Conduct books were 'how to' manuals that in varying levels of detail instructed as to appearance, conversation and desirable achievements. All of them recommended the

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[70] *Proceedings Against William Prynne*, ed. by Gardiner, p. 10.

[71] Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, pp. 167-85.

[72] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), p. 162.

[73] Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 207.

reader to adapt himself to his surroundings and to be, as far as possible, universally popular. The quintessential conduct book, Castiglione's *The Courtier*, suggested that the ideal gentleman should 'frame himselfe according to the inclination of them he accompanieth him selfe withall'. Sir Thomas Elyot's more theoretical text, *The Governor*, advised that 'Affabilitie is of a wonderfull efficacie or power in procurynge love'; and Giovanni Della Casa's extremely practical *Galateo* insisted that 'plesaūt & gētle behauiours, have power to draw their harts & mynds vnto vs, with whome we liue'.[74] Thus one's appearance and outward behavious could effect viewers and, to a certain extent, manipulate their responses.[75]

But presenting a self-conscious model like this - a predetermined mien of affability and politic good nature - could run extremely close to deceit, and disguise. For the cultivated exterior was not a 'true' mirroring of internal reality. Conduct books recommended the reader to *appear* better than he was: more knowledgable, more skilled, wittier, more urbane. 'Dissimulation and feigning', writes Greenblatt, 'are an important part of the instruction given by almost every court manual'.[76] *The Courtier* made explicit both sides of this argument. Following a disquisition of how a gentleman may enhance the appearance of his personal attributes, the character Lord Gasper Pallavicin speaks out. 'I thinke not this an arte, but a very deceite, and I believe it is not meet for him that will be an honest man to deceive at any time.' Sir Frederick Fregoso replies, somewhat equivocally, that this 'is rather an ornament that accompanieth the thing he doth, than a deceite: and though it be a deceite, yet it is not to be disalowed'. Within the pages of *The*

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[74] Baldissare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by Sir Thomas Hoby (London, 1928), p. 121. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor* (1531, repr. Menston, 1970), fol. 1015^{v} [irregular pagination]. John della Casa, *A Treatise of the Maners and Behauiours*, trans. by Robert Paterson, The English Experience, 120 (London, 1576; repr. Amsterdam, 1969), p. 3.

[75] Contributions to the study of conduct literature which emphasize the role that such texts had in shaping individual and collective behaviours include: Ruth Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century* (Gloucester, MA, 1964); Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana, 1978); Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley, 1984); Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Nets and Bridles: Early Modern Conduct Books and Sixteenth-Century Women's Lyrics', in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London, 1987), pp. 39-72; Anna Bryson, 'The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanour and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. by Nigel Llewellyn and Lucy Gent (London, 1990), pp. 136-53; Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*; and Jorge Arditi, *A Genealogy of Manners: Transformations of Social Relations in France and England from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago, 1998).

[76] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 163.

Courtier, 'a certaine warie dissimulation' wins the day.[77]

By placing the discursive treatment of players and wandering poor beside the genre of conduct literature, we see clearly how the early modern vision of disguise splintered along the lines of class. Deceit and counterfeit were inherently suspicious, but only in the marginal and socially inferior. For the elite 'dissimulation' could be an acceptable tool that, wielded skilfully, might help achieve advancement and repute. However, personal narratives suggest that this 'us and them' attitude can be further distilled into a 'me and others' stance. The adoption of disguise might always be suspicious deceit in someone else, but for the individual concerned it was a prudent and clever manipulation of appearances. But however disguise was interpreted, it was always understood as masking, rather than changing, internal truth. The appearances of identity could be altered, but not - unless by God - its essence. For Charles I to dress up and put on a false beard was, in his cultural circumstances therefore, a 'good' idea. Certainly he and his companions were not very skilled in the subtleties of disguise, or their appearance would not have aroused comment and unease. But he was able to reveal his underlying identity and thus allay, through privilege, all suspicion that deceit engendered.

This proposition of an early modern sense of self as being stable and essentially unalterable, runs directly counter to the work of many literary historians. Taking the disguise of gender as their starting point, these scholars interpret the play of appearances as reflecting a corresponding fluidity of both personal truth and cultural category. From instabilities of gender they then arrive quickly at a fundamental instability in concepts of self. Following their lead, therefore, we will explore one specific type of disguise. Like them, we will now turn to cross-dressing and the masking of gender.

He or She?

Scholars have conflated, and inflated, four distinct contexts of gender disguise: cross-dressing that occurs in literary texts; in anti-theatrical polemic; in the related genre of controversial tracts; and in real life. Linda Woodbridge, for example, despite her warnings

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[77] Castiglione, *The Courtier*, p. 132. It must be noted that this view was not universally accepted. For example, the French author Philibert de Vienne wrote a satire of such models of courtiership, which was translated by George North and published in England in 1575 under the title *The Philosopher of the Court.* For contemporary objections to civility as codified in conduct books, including the charge of hypocrisy, see Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, pp. 199-223; and Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of* The Courtier: *The European Reception of Castiglione's* Cortegiano (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 99-116.

about the dangers of taking literature as unproblematic evidence of day to day happenings, still extrapolates out from drama and the *Hic Mulier* tracts, to paint a picture of seventeenth-century women who 'stalked London streets in breeches and weaponry'.[78] Valerie Lucas, too, states that 'contemporary documents suggest that a subculture of female transvestites existed in London and its environs'.[79] And Mary Beth Rose examines plays and polemic in order to illuminate 'the struggle for sexual equality in Jacobean England'.[80] These readings are characterized by a remarkable permeability of discourse, in which literature bleeds freely through to life, and both are interpreted through a modern agenda. Rather than accept these conclusions at face value, let us then re-examine the sources to see what they say about cross-dressing. Leaving aside the category of dramatic writing, what do the three contexts of anti-theatrical polemic, controversial tract, and documented cases from life, tell us about the disguise of gender in early modern England?

One circumstance of dramatic production that was particularly unacceptable to those opposing the theatres, was the standard practice of using male actors to play female roles. If all acting was deceitful pretense, then the disguising of gender was its most extreme manifestation.[81] As with other aspects of the anti-theatrical debate, at first the complaints were quite modestly articulated. In 1577 John Northbrooke but briefly touched on those 'which, contrarie to nature and the lawe, doe attire themselues, being men, in women's

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[78] Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womenkind, 1540-1620* (Urbana, 1984), p. 326.

[79] Valerie Lucas, '*Hic Mulier*: The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 24 (1988), 65-84 (p. 80).

[80] Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Ithaca, 1988), p. 7. The relevant section in the text is Chapter 2, 'Sexual Disguise and Social Mobility in Jacobean City Comedy', pp. 43-92. The main body of this chapter was first published as 'Women in Men's Clothing: Apparel and Social Stability in *The Roaring Girl*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 14 (1984), 367-91.

[81] Contributions to the subject of boy actors playing female roles include: Stephen Orgel, 'Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?', *South Atlantic Quarterley*, 88. Orgel's article and the rest of the work appearing in this issue was subsequently published as *Displacing Homophobia: Gay Male Perspectives in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Ronald Butters, John Clum and Michael Moon (Durham, 1989); Lisa Jardine, 'Boy Actors, Female Roles and Elizabethan Eroticism', in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (London, 1991), pp. 57-67; Peter Stallybrass, 'Transvestism and the "Body Beneath": Speculating on the Boy Actor', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (London, 1992), pp. 64-83; Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor, 1994); Ann Thompson, 'Women / "women" and the Stage', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1500-1700*, ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 100-16; Martin White, *Renaissance Drama in Action: An Introduction to Aspects of Theatre Practice and Performance* (London, 1988), pp. 82-88.

apparrell, and women in menne's apparell'.[82] By 1599, however, John Rainoldes had make cross-dressing a main polemical platform.[83] Unsurprisingly, in the next century Prynne also weighed into the argument, devoting at least forty-two pages of ranting and repetitive attack to cross-gendered dressing and other 'lust-exciting apparell'.[84] 'God himselfe', wrote Prynne going straight to the top, 'doth [...] expresly inhibit men to put on womans apparell, because it is an abomination to him: therefore it must certainly be unlawfull, yea abominable for Players to put on such apparell to act a womans part'.[85] Like Prynne, all of the anti-theatricalists who enter the lists to defend sartorial seemliness base their arguments, either implicitly or with explicit reference, on a passage from the Bible. A favourite with reformers in a number of contexts, we have already met Deuteronomy 22. 5 in the preceding chapter. 'The woman shal not weare that which pertaineth vnto the man, nether shal a man put on womans raiment: for all that do so, *are* abominacion vnto the Lord thy God.'

These tracts, while sharing societal assumptions about the power of appearances and the dangers of disguise, were fairly extreme products of early modern thought. Yet, ironically, when it comes to issues of gender they evidence the same willfulness and tendency to exaggerated and selective interpretation that characterizes some modern scholars. One such is Laura Levine. Investigating anti-theatricality and effeminization, she concludes that at the heart of the attacks on the stage lay the fear 'that costume could actually alter the gender of the male body beneath'. The male self was inherently unstable, and could be dissolved, or structurally transformed, into a woman. Not only could actors be changed by the roles they played, but the spectators, too, were transmuted as the behaviours, feelings and motivations of the actor/character were transferred to the audience. 'In this way the spectator quite literally takes on the identity of the actor'. Levine thus reads anti-stage tracts as embedded in the idea 'that one person could be changed into another, the spectator into a replica of the actor, and the actor himself into the part'. Underlying this idea is 'the anxiety that there is not such thing as a

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[82] Northbrooke, *A Treatise*, p. 101.

[83] John Rainoldes, *Th'overthrow of Stage-Playes* (1599), (New York, 1974).

[84] Pyrnne, *Histriomastix*, pp. 178-220, p. 216.

[85] Ibid., p. 179.

stable identity'.[86]

But an alternative reading of anti-stage sources is possible; a reading which is both simpler and more consistent with personal narratives and other contemporary texts. The anti-theatrical fear was not, as Laura Levine asserts, one that dreaded the boy actor would be physically transformed into a woman, or that the audience would be likewise changed. Rather it was a fear that the spectacle would alter the perceptions of viewers and participants, so that they would behave *as if* it were real. Thus Prynne states that men's wearing of women's garments 'transformes the *male in outward appearance into the more ignoble female sex, and nullifies that externall difference betweene them*'. On the stage this created an immoral spectacle 'from whence no good at all proceeds', for the actors and audience alike are drawn on '*both to contemplative and actuall lewdnesse*'.[87] In the same vein Gosson warned that 'vice is learned w[ith] beholding'. The senses are tickled, desire pricked, and 'those impressions of mind are secretly coũueyed ouer to ý gazers, which ý plaiers do coũterfeit on ý stage'.[88] It was the counterfeiting that was so threatening to Prynne and his fellow anti-theatricalists - the 'as if' situation, or the pretense and deceit involved in mimesis.

The disguise of gender, while particularly offensive, was thus but a symptom of the larger moral malaise. Indeed, Jonas Barish has suggested that the Deuteronomic citation is a *post hoc* justification for the anti-theatrical position, not a causal reason. When it was suggested to Rainoldes that the Deuteronomic verse could be circumvented by having female actors playing female roles, he wrote that this was so offensive that it 'would be a remedy almost worse than flouting the verse'.[89] Prynne dismissed female actors and cross-dressed male players equally: 'both of them are abominable both intollerable, neither if them laudable or necessary; therefore both of them to bee abandoned, neither of them to

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[86] *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 3, 13, 14. Other scholars who also hold to the proposition of an early modern sense of self as fluid and unstable include Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 27; Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London, 1992), p. 32ff.; Elizabeth Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London, 1992); and David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (eds), *Staging the Renaissance*, esp. pp. 8-11. Jonas Barish, however, in *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* asserts the concept of an absolute identity and a concomitant belief in absolute sincerity, p. 94.

[87] Prynne, *Histriomastix*, p. 208. Emphasis in the original.

[88] Gosson, *Playes Confuted*, pp. 192-93.

[89] Rainoldes quoted in Barish, *Anti-theatrical Prejudice*, p. 91.

be henceforth tollerated among Christians'.[90] In other words, 'the position adopted must therefore be seen not as the *result* of a given interpretation of the disputed verse, but at the *basis* for it'.[91] So, as far as cross-dressing in anti-theatrical polemic is concerned, the reports of its life are much exaggerated. The scriptural injunction was produced not as a reason for prohibiting the disguise of gender, but as a justification for condemning both it, and the enveloping concept of theatrical mimesis.

Like anti-theatricalism, the controversy surrounding the nature and place of women had a long history. However, also like anti-theatrical sentiment, it burgeoned in the middle of the sixteenth century into a vigorous and energetically waged pamphlet war.[92] Tracts attacking, and also defending female nature were produced - sometimes by the same author - as rhetorical exercises in this popular debate. While these treatises 'provided a formal framework' for the controversy, interest in the topic was immense, and as with other cultural preoccupations the argument spilled over in to ballads, sermons, conduct books, poetry and drama.[93]

A standard theme in controversial literature linked women with the foolish pursuit of fashionable dress. Vain and greedy they rated fine clothing above reputation, sexual honesty or financial prudence. Inevitably these negative exemplars always finished unhappily. In Stephen Gosson's *Quips for Vpstart, Newfangled Gentlewomen*, a verse tract of 1595, women of all ages are tempted - quite literally - by the devil's work. '(*Don Sathan*) Lord of fained lies, / All these new fangles did deuise.' More originally, Gosson provided the reader with a supposed genealogy of the farthingale: originally the frame was used by whores suffering from the pox to keep their skirts from being soiled by dirty undergarments. 'These hoopes that hippes and haunch do hide' also masked the prostitute's

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[90] Prynne, *Histriomastix*, p. 216.

[91] Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, p. 91.

[92] Stephen Gosson produced work in both genres: *The School of Abuse*, *Plays Confuted in Fiue Actions*, and *Quips for Upstart, Newfangled Gentlewomen* (1595). Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara McManus discuss the characteristics of the controversial phenomenon in *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640* (Urbana, 1985). They point out that the rise of printing in Renaissance England both enabled more tracts to be produced, and made their wider dissemination possible. Perhaps as a result of a more socially varied readership, the controversy was less aristocratic and courtly than its medieval precursor, and also more secular. See also Diane Purkiss, 'Material Girls: The Seventeenth-Century Woman Debate', in *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*, ed. by Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London, 1992), pp. 69-101.

[93] Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind*, pp. 11-12.

other occupational hazard: pregnancy.[94] Eight years later in *The Batchelar's Banquet*, a manual cautioning men to the single life, female lust for apparel was central to the plot and argument of the first five chapters.[95] In Chapter 1, for example, the chief cause of marital strife is a newly wed wife's desire for beautiful clothes. Although they can't afford it she manipulates her husband into giving her a new outfit, as a result of which they end in hardship and misery. In the following chapter a finely dressed woman wishes to go out and show off her clothes. Conflating sartorial greed and sexual appetite, the text soon leads her into adultery.[96]

Around 1620 this theme took a particular turn, however, and crystallized into the motif of women who apparelled themselves as men. It is this topos that forms the subject of two much quoted pamphlets, *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir*, licensed within a week of each other in 1620. The ungrammatical Latin gives a clear indication of their content, as do their full titles. *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman: Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminines of our Times*, is an attack on women dressed, and acting, in a masculine mode. *Haec-Vir: Or The Womanish-Man: Being an Answere to a late Booke intitlued Hic Mulier*, which purports to be a riposte, is structured as a dialogue between the two eponymous characters. The text begins with both these figures mistaking the gender of the other. Once the confusion is clarified Hic Mulier opens her defence, which ranges over the positive nature of variety and change, the importance of freedom of choice, and the limitations of socially constructed customs. She then turns to her main, and more conservative argument - a counter attack on the Womanish-Man and his appropriation of the accoutrements of femininity. Since, Hic Mulier argues, there must be a distinction between the sexes, women have had no choice but to take up 'those manly things which you haue forsaken'. All that needs to be done to restore the old and rightful order, is for Haec Vir to relinquish his effeminate apparel: 'Cast then from you our ornaments, and put on your owne armours'. The two characters then swap clothing and titles, and the newly named Haec Mulier and Hic Vir close the text happily as 'true men,

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[94] Stephen Gosson's *Quips for Vpstart, Newfangled Gentlewomen* (London, 1595), sigs A4^{r}, B^{v}.

[95] *The Batchelar's Banquet: or A Banquet for Batchelars: Wherein is prepared sundry daintie dishes to furnish their Table, curiously drest, and seriously serued*, in *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart, 5 vols (New York, 1963), I, 149-275. The text has been mis-attributed to Dekker.

[96] On the linkage of extravagant clothing and sexual immorality see also Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 82-84, 86, 90-91.

and true women'.[97]


HIC MVLIER
OR
The Man-VVoman:
Being a Medicine to cure the Coldish Disease of
the Sisters, in the Masculine-Feminines
of our Times.
Expressed in a briefe Declamation.
Non omnes pariunt quinti quinti.
Mistris shall you be tolld or not tolld?

Figure 40: Title page *Hic Mulier*, 1620
Source: Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind*

These two short pamphlets have spawned a disproportionate amount of secondary comment, and have formed the evidential base for numerable claims about the cross-dressing craze of seventeenth-century London.[98] But in claiming that men and women wore one another's apparel, what are these texts actually saying? Firstly, a closer look at the text and title pages banishes our modern assumption of women in breeches. The main charges levelled against women involved head wear, and the apparelling of the torso. Hic Mulier has exchanged:

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[97] *Haec-Vir*, sigs [C2^{v}, C4^{r}], in *Three Pamphlets on the Jacobean Antifeminist Controversy*, ed. by Barbara Baines, Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints (Delmar NY, 1978). A third tract, *Muld Sacke: Or The Apologie of Hic Mulier: To the Late Declamation against her*, was also published in 1620. Although trading on the back of the two earlier pamphlets, it quickly moves from the topic to widely criticize all manner of social types and behaviours.

[98] For example: Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance*; Sandra Clark, '*Hic Mulier*, *Haec Vir* and the Controversy Over Masculine Women', *Studies in Philology*, 82 (1985), 157-83; Susan Shapiro, 'Amazons, Hermaphrodites, and Plain Monsters: The 'Masculine' Women in English Satire and Social Criticism from 1580-1640', *Atlantis*, 13, (1987), 66-76; Valerie Lucas, '*Hic Mulier*: The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England'.

the modest attire of the comely Hood, Cawle, Coyfe, handsome Dresse or Kerchiefe, to the cloudy Ruffianly broad-brim'd Hatte, and wanton Feather, the modest vpper parts of a concealing straight gowne, to the loose, lasciuious ciuill embracement of a French doublet, being all vnbutton'd to entice [...] and extreme short wasted to giue a most easie way to euery luxurious action: the glory of a faire large hayre, to the shame of most ruffianly short lockes; the side, thicke gather'd, and close guarding sauegards, to the short, weake, thinne, loose, and euery hand-entertaining short basses; for Needles, Swords; for Prayer bookes, bawdy legs [...] and for womens modestie, all Mimicke and apish inciuilitie. [99]

In support of the text, the title page illustration pictures two women in, one assumes, front fastening 'doublets' (Fig. 40). One of them shamelessly wears a hat and feather - her shame indicated by her gazing into a mirror, a common emblem of vanity. The other is hatless, in order that the barber can tend or further cut her short hair. While presumably a potent image to contemporaries, the significations of the pictured hats and shoulder-length hair are generally lost on modern viewers. The charges in *Haec-vir* are almost identical, warning Hic Mulier that:

> till you weare hats to defend the Sunne, not to couer shorne locks, Caules to adorne the head, not *Gregorians* to warme braines, till you weare innocent white Ruffes, not iealous yellow iaundis'd bands, well shapt, comely and close Gownes, not light skirts and French doublets, for Poniards, Samplers, for Pistols Prayer-bookes, and for ruffled Bootes and Spurres, neate Shooes and clean-garterd Stockings, you shal neuer lose the title of *Basenesse*, *Vnnaturalnes*, *Shamelesnesse*, and *Foolishnesse*.

She counters Haec Vir's accusations, asking him in turn:

> why doe you curle, frizell and powder your haiyres [...] why doe you rob vs of our Ruffes, of our Earerings, Carkanets, and Mamillions, of our Fannes and Feathers, our Busks and French bodies, nay, of our Maskes, hoods, Shadowes and Shapynas? Not so much as the very Art of Painting, but you haue so greedily ingrost it.[100]

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[99] *Hic Mulier* sigs [A4^{r}-A4^{v}], in *Three Pamphlets*, ed. by Baines.

[100] *Haec-Vir*, sigs B4^{v}, C^{r}, in *Three Pamphlets*, ed. by Baines.

Again the title page illustration shows a female figure in a skirt and front fastening 'doublet' (Fig. 41). Underneath her large hat and feather her hair is short, and beneath her skirts she is wearing spurs. In one hand she carries a pistol, and with the other she holds the hilt of a sword. From her girdle hangs a dagger. These references to women carrying weapons perhaps allude to the custom of females wearing knives fastened at the girdle, a practice that 'appears to have been pretty general among the European women at the end of the sixteenth century'. It may have been that knives were given to women as wedding gifts, as being valuable domestic utensils.[101] By contrast, the complementary male figure in the illustration is holding a mirror, and what appears to be a feathered fan. His hose are decorated with elaborate knots of ribbon.

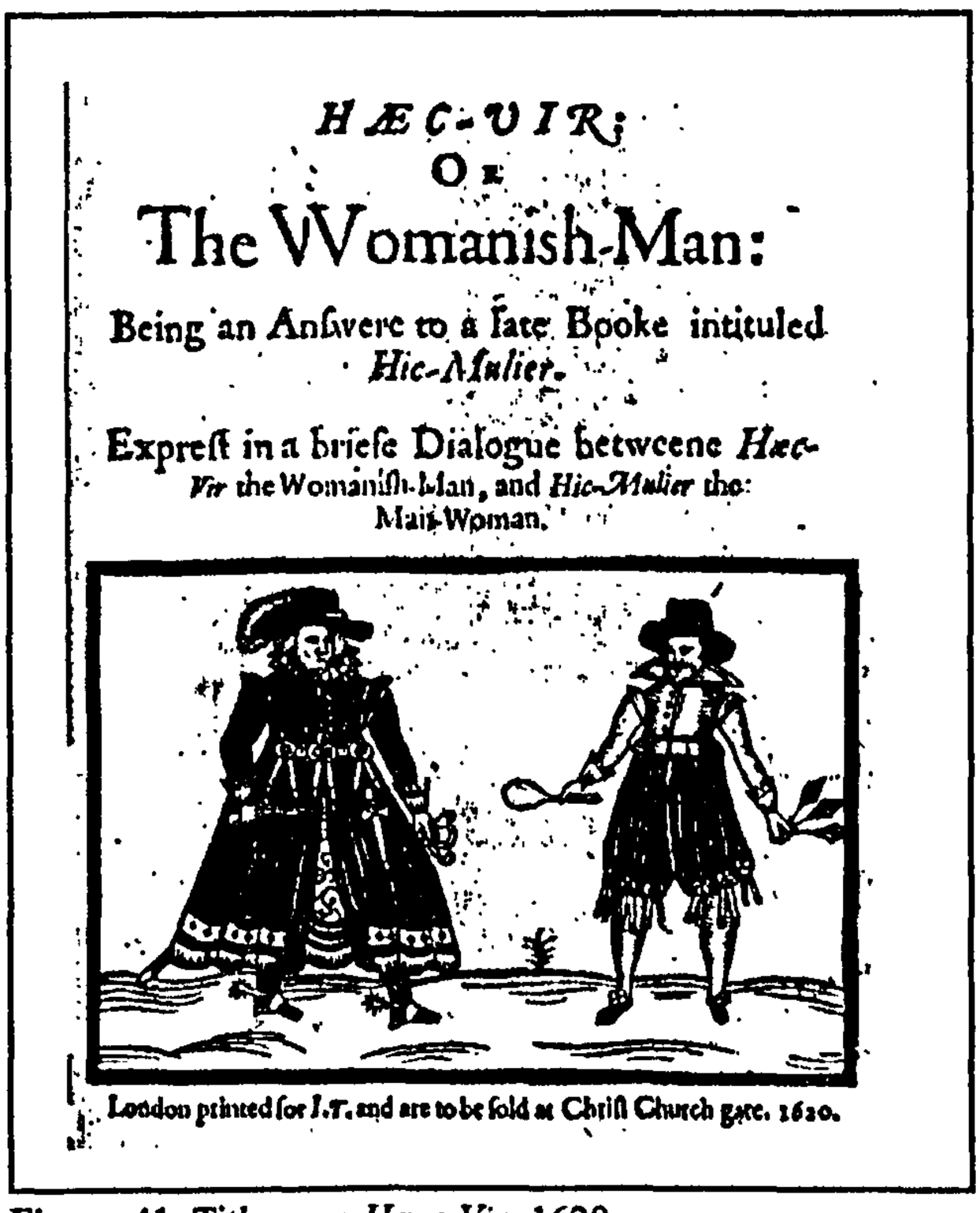
HÆC-VIR;
OR
The Womanish-Man:
Being an Answere to a late Booke intituled
Hic-Mulier.
Exprest in a briefe Dialogue betweene *Hæc-Vir* the Womanish-Man, and *Hic-Mulier* the Man-Woman.
London printed for I.T. and are to be sold at Christ Church gate. 1620.

Figure 41: Title page *Haec Vir*, 1620
Source: Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind*

[101] Francis Douce, 'Observations on certain ornaments of Female Dress', *Archaeologia*, 12 (1796), 215-16. C.W. Cunnington and P. Cunnington state that in the first half of the sixteenth century a dagger might be worn from the girdle, but that this was rare, see *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1954), p. 85. In a dialogue from 1605 written by Peter Brondell, a lady orders her maid to 'give me my girdle and see that all the furniture be at it: looke if my Cizers, the pincers, the pen-knife, the knife to close Letters, with the bodkin, the ear-picker and my Seale be in the case', see *The Elizabethan Home: Discovered in Two Dialogues by Claudius Hollyband and Peter Brondell*, ed. by M. St.Clare Byrne (London, 1949), p. 40. A slightly earlier reference is found in 'A New Courtly Sonet, of the Lady Greensleves', in which one of the verses runs 'Thy purse, and eke thy gay gilt knives', see *Satirical Songs and Poems on Costume*, ed. by Frederick Fairholt, Percy Society, Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages, 27 (London, 1849), pp. 96-100 (p. 97).

So, even in extreme polemic, far from accusing women of appropriating breeches and men of lacing themselves into dresses, both were castigated for the cut of their existing garments and their use of fashionable accessories and techniques. Given that in some cases the same items were censured for both men and women indicates that the context of wear was highly important in generating meaning, and that use was differently gendered. For example, hair was immodest on women when cut 'short', and on men when 'over' tended. Both were accused of misusing ruffs and, similarly, feathers. The female transgression in the matter of the former concerned colour. The starch that was used to set neck and wrist wear into their large elaborate shapes, when died yellow, had significations of immorality. Ruffs in general - entirely non-functional and impractical confections of fashion - had long been a favourite object of reforming zeal and comment. When coloured they became especially potent signs of pride, vanity and abandonment. They were even implicated in the *cause célèbre* of the Overbury murder as Anne Turner, the woman hung in 1615 for her part in poisoning Sir Thomas, was linked in the public mind with a vision of flaunting yellow ruffs.[102]

This insistence on the fashionable nature of their transgressions should make us question whether the disguise of gender was, in fact, the real target of polemical attack. Certainly in these contexts disguise was used as a literary ploy, but no one was really taken in. The clothing and comportment complained of was not a serious attempt to mask gender, but an essay in chic and avant-garde fashion. Indeed, far from making women look like men, the styles offended because they made the wearer bolder and more flamboyant. Rather than disguising, they drew attention to the female body, making it immodest and sexually available - a charge, incidentally, levelled against different styles of women's dress throughout the ages.[103] So the doublet style is contrasted with the gown, the one being 'modest' and 'concealing', the other 'loose' and 'lasciuious', 'all vnbutton'd to entice [...] and extreme short wasted to giue a most easie way to euery luxurious action'. Similarly the

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[102] See Alastair Bellany, 'Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1997), 179-210; Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 59-85; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, ' "Rugges of London and the Diuell's Band": Irish Mantles and Yellow Starch as Hybrid London Fashion', in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia, 2000), pp. 128-49; and David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (London, 1993), pp. 6-10.

[103] Laura Gowing interprets this literature in a similar way, noting the androgynous body as being sexually charged, see *Domestic Dangers*, p. 83.

safeguard - a garment worn like an apron for protection against the dirt - becomes a protector of chastity; it is 'close guarding'. By contrast the minutely shorter skirts pictured in *Heac-Vir* are 'short, weake, thinne, loose, and euery hand-entertaining'.[104] Clearly these were spurious accusations for they imputed characteristics to garments that were not implied by cut or construction. Even the crucial opposition of doublet versus bodice was an imposed one, for the basic principles of design and fastening were identical. However, the point of the attacks was not a realistic analysis of form and function, but a condemnation of the most adventurous of styles and wearers.

In keeping with this discursive concern about fashion, we find in the *Hic Mulier* text particularly, a huge number of references to deformity and monstrosity. As already noted in the previous chapter, extremes of fashion pushed at the hitherto accepted boundaries of the body, creating new and 'unnatural' configurations. 'Come then, you Masculine-women, for you are my Subject,' wrote the *Hic Mulier* author:

> with a deformitie neuer before dream'd of, that haue made your selues stranger things that euer *Noahs* Arke vnladed [...] 'Tis of you, I intreat, and of your monstrous deformitie; You that haue made your bodies [...] not halfe man, halfe woman; halfe fish, halfe flesh; half beast, halfe Monster; but all Ody ous, all Diuell.[105]

Scholars have been misled, then, in imagining a subculture of cross-dressed men, and particularly women, who appropriated the apparel of the other gender in order to make some kind of social or political point. It was fashionable, rather than cross-gendered apparel, that was being vilified.

Furthermore, despite an apparent crescendo of disapprobation, none of this was new. The *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir* tracts appeared in 1620, shortly after an outburst by James against women's attire. Our report of this comes via John Chamberlain who, on 25 January 1620 wrote to Dudley Carleton that:

> Yesterday the bishop of London called together all his clergie about this towne, and told them he had expresse commaundment from the King to will them to inveigh vehemently and bitterly in theyre sermons against the insolencie of our women, and theyre wearing of brode brimd hats, pointed dublets, theyre haire

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[104] *Hic Mulier*, sig. [A4ᵛ], in *Three Pamphlets*, ed. by Baines.

[105] Ibid., sigs A3ᵛ-[A4ᵀ].

cut short or shorne, and some of them stillettaes or poinards, and such other trinckets of like moment.

Over a month later Chamberlain reported the rather confused outcome, for it seems one cleric either seized the opportunity, or confused the order, to preach against those inflammatory yellow ruffs. However, as Chamberlain tells it the elite favourers of this fashion, having the ear of the King, won the day:

> The Deane of Westminster hath ben very strict in his church against Ladies and gentlewomen about yellow ruffes and wold not suffer them to be admitted into any pew, which beeing yll taken and the King moved in yt, he is come to disadvowe him, and sayes his meaning was not for yellow ruffes but for other man-like and unseemly apparell.[106]

Literary historians have coupled the appearance of the *Hic Mulier* texts with James's order, and arrived at 'a short-lived phenomenon, at its height in the early 1620s'.[107] Lawrence Stone, too, sited 'manly' female fashions squarely in Jacobean England, even going so far as to impute a causal relationship between courtly homosexuality and women's attire.[108] Not only is there no evidence for this, but what information we do have indicates the contrary: that these complaints about female dress have a long and continuous history, and are not a phenomenon specific either to James's reign, or the 1620s.[109] For example, almost fifty years previously George Gascoigne's satire *The Steele Glas*, in part turned its attention to fashionably apparelled, painted and perfumed ladies:

> What should these be? [...]
> They be not men: for why? they have no beards.
> They be no boyes, which wear such side lõg gowns.
> They be no Gods, for al their gallant glosse.
> They be no divels, (I trow) which seme so saintish.
> What be they? women? masking it in mens weedes?
> With dutchkin dublets, and with Jerkins jaggde?

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[106] *Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, 286-87; 294, 11 March 1620.

[107] Clark, 'Controversy over Masculine Women', p. 157.

[108] Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 666.

[109] Susan Shapiro offers a brief survey of 'transvestite' fashions, testifying to the 'persistence of this phenomenon' in 'Sex, Gender, and Fashion in Medieval and Early Modern Britain', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 20 (1987), 113-28 (p. 113).

With Spanish spangs, and ruffes fet out of France,
With high copt hattes, and fethers flaunt a flaunt?
They be so sure even *Wo* to *Men* in deede.[110]

Unsurprisingly Phillip Stubbes, who covered so much in his resounding *Anatomie of Abuses*, spared time to condemn - repetitively - the by now familiar target of women in doublets. They are:

> buttoned vp the brest, and made with wings, welts and pinions on the shoulder points, as mans apparel is, for all the world, & though this be a kinde of attire appropriate onely to man, yet they blush not to wear it, and if they could as wel chaunge their sex, & put on the kinde of man, as they can weare apparel assigned onely to man, I think they would as verely become men indeed as now they degenerat from godly sober women, in wearing this wanton lewd kinde of attire proper onely to man.[111]

For Stubbes, then, and for some modern scholars, it is but a small leap from bodices styled after men's doublets, to gender fluidity and transposition of sexual categories. But, as by now should be clear, this is a discursive leap only, and not one that was made anywhere but on the page.

One of the women in Stubbes's time who 'did not blush to wear' a doublet, was Elizabeth herself (Fig. 42). In 1617 her successor's consort, Anne of Denmark, posed ready for the hunt - in doublet, hat and feather (Fig. 43);[112] and Catherine of Braganza was yet another Queen given to 'manly' styles. Pepys reported with approval the fashions that she and her courtly entourage adopted, for 'it was pretty to see the young pretty ladies dressed like men; in velvet coats, caps with ribbands, and with laced bands just like men'. The following year, however, this had earned his censure:

> Walking here in the galleries, I find the Ladies of Honour dressed in their riding garbs, with coats and doublets with deep skirts, just for all the world like men, and buttoned their doublets up the breast, with perriwigs and with hats; so that, only for a long petticoat dragging under their men's coat, nobody could

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[110] George Gascoigne, *The Steele Glas* (1576), in *George Gascoigne: The Complete Works*, ed. by John W. Cunliffe, Anglistica & Americana Ser., 82, 2 vols (Hildesheim, 1974), II, 173-74.

[111] Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses*, The English Experience, 489 (London, 1583; repr. Amsterdam, 1972), sigs [F5^{r}-F5^{v}].

[112] See Orgel, *Impersonations*, p. 84.

tale them for women in any point whatever - which was an odde sight, and a sight did not please me.[113]

Figure 42: Elizabeth I, *c.*1575, ?Federigo Zuccaro
Source: Marshall, *Elizabeth I*

Figure 43: Anne of Denmark, *c.*1617, Paul van Somer (detail)
Source: *Dynasties*, ed. by Hearn

It is abundantly clear by now that the clothes which caught the polemicists' attention were the styles of high fashion. The elite and aspirant wearers were not donning men's garments, but wearing clothes cut for females with alterations of decoration and form to *resemble* male attire. As the author of *Hic Mulier* acknowledged of the class specific character of the phenomenon, 'the greater the person is, the greater is the rage of this sicknesses, and the more they haue to support the eminence of their Fortunes, the more they bestowe in the augmentation of their deformities'.[114] For evidence about the lower orders, we must look to the extremely different source of court cases.

Little research has been done on actual recorded instances of gender disguise. The chief contribution, coming from Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol, deals almost exclusively with Dutch incidents of this type.[115] Michael Shapiro, in a primarily literary

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[113] *Diary*, VI, 172, 27 July 1665; VII, 162, 12 June 1666. On the development of women's riding dress, and its masculine characteristics, see Janet Arnold, 'Dashing Amazons: The Development of Women's Riding Dress, *c.* 1500-1900', in *Defining Dress: Dress and Object, Meaning and Identity*, ed. by Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson (Manchester, 1999), pp. 10-29.

[114] *Hic Mulier*, sig. B2^{r}, in *Three Pamphlets*, ed. by Baines.

[115] Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 1989).

study, does discuss a number of cases unearthed in the Repertoires of the Aldermen's Court of London and the Minute Books of Bridewell Hospital.[116] F.G. Emmison's well-known work with Essex records has also thrown up a few instances in the context of presentments to the church courts.[117] Apart from these few studies, the only other additions to the scholarship have been one-off explorations of chance found incidents.[118] The scarcity of the scholarship reflects, it seems, the paucity of primary material. For despite Dekker and van de Pol's claim that transvestism was a 'deeply rooted' and 'widespread' tradition, there is very little evidence of it from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.[119] In fact, David Cressy has described such archival material that introduces to us actual, nonfictional cross-dressers as 'that rarest of rare birds'.[120]

The first thing to note about the cases that have come to light is that they treat almost exclusively with men and women from the lower orders. Typical subjects are maid servant Magdalen Gawyn, or fruit seller Margaret Bolton.[121] Secondly, the women (and very occasionally men) charged with cross-dressing were not donning fashionable garments that only resembled the clothes of the opposite sex. Rather, they were attiring themselves in the specific, and relatively humble, garments usually worn by the other gender. Thus a Littlebury woman, in 1585, 'did wear man's apparel disorderly in her master's house'. Jacob Cornwall's wife, the court was told in 1592, 'used to wear young men's garters and

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[116] Shapiro, *Gender in Play*, pp. 16-20. A transcription of the thirteen cases, compiled by Mark Benbow and Alasdair Hawkyard, is printed with Shapiro's text in Appendix C, pp. 225-34. Julie Wheelwright in *Amazons and Military Maids: Women Who Dressed as Men in Pursuit of Life, Liberty and Happiness* (London, 1989), explores the stories of women who, disguised as men, joined the army and navy. Her case studies are almost exclusively from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Similarly, Estelle C. Jelinek, 'Disguise Autobiographies: Women Masquerading as Men', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10 (1987), 53-62 examines women's own accounts of cross-dressing, nearly all of them from the nineteenth century.

[117] F.G. Emmison, *Elizabeth Life II: Morals and Church Courts* (Chelmsford, 1973), p. 8.

[118] David Cressy, 'Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 35, (1996), 438-65. Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson, 'Sexual Identities in Early Modern England', *Gender and History*, 7 (1995), 363-77. Stephen Greenblatt in 'Fiction and Friction', in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. by Thomas Heller, Morton Sosna and David Wellbery (Stanford, 1986), pp. 30-52 touches on transvestism, and includes in his notes a synopsis of a cross-dressing/gender disguise case in Virginia in 1629.

[119] Dekker and van de Pol, *Female Transvestism*.

[120] Cressy, *Gender Trouble*, p. 445.

[121] Repertories 18: 372 and Bridewell Court Minutes, 2: 89^{v}-90^{v}. Bridewell Court Minutes 2: 163^{v}, 168^{v}. Transcribed in Shapiro, *Gender in Play*.

said she would so to do till they came for them'.[122]

From their evidence, Dekker and van de Pol have concluded that the strategy of masculine dressing was resorted to by some women as a way of circumventing their sexual vulnerability. Often the women in their study claimed that being apparelled as a man they were able to avoid prostitution brought on by poverty, or follow a way of life unhampered by unwanted sexual overtures. 'By far the greater part of our women were unmarried, and cross-dressing served them as a means to maintain their virginal state, or in any case, to avoid having to marry.'[123] This seems to have grown out of medieval tradition of chaste, transvestite female saints who took to men's clothes in order to escape persecution, and lead lives of sanctity.[124] However in early modern England, discursively at least, the opposite seems to have been true. Rather than cross-dressing having a possible component of chastity, it is almost exclusively linked with sexual incontinence.[125] While the actual motivations of the women involved are lost to us, in the cultural imagination at least, dressing in male attire was almost always a flagrantly provocative sexual act. For example, in 1576 Dorothy Clayton, spinster, was found guilty - 'contrary to all honestye of womanhood' - of going about the city 'apparyled in mans attyre'. She was also found to have 'abbusyed her bodye with sundry persons by reason of her incontynancy of Lyfe'.[126] Not only, as in this case, was cross-dressing was the indicator of immorality. In some instances a woman disguising her gender provided the 'proof' of her dishonesty. In 1601 Elizabeth Griffyn, alias Partridge, was sent to the Bridewell Court only 'upon suspicon of ill and lewd liefe'. Once there 'yt was evidentlie proved to this Courte that she hath used

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[122] Emmison, *Morals and Church Courts*, p. 8.

[123] Dekker and van de Pol, *Female Transvestism*, pp. 39, 45.

[124] See Vern L. Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages', *American Journal of Sociology*, 79 (1973-74), 1381-94; John Anson, 'The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif', *Viator*, 5 (1974), 1-32; and J.L. Welch, 'Cross-Dressing and Cross-Purposes: Gender Possibilities in the Acts of Thecla', in *Gender Reversal and Gender Cultures*, ed. by Sabrina Petra Ramet (London, 1996), pp. 66-78. Valerie Hotchkiss, *Clothes Makes the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1996), covers many aspects of medieval transvestism, including that which appears in hagiography.

[125] Jean Howard, 'Cross-Dressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', in *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing*, ed. by Lesley Ferris (London, 1993), pp. 20-46 (pp. 25-26).

[126] Repertories, 19: 93. Transcribed in Shapiro, *Gender in Play*.

to goe in manes apparrell': case closed.[127]

Punishments for offences involving cross-dressing were frequently of the shaming variety, in which the transgressor's misdemeanours were made humiliatingly public. So Magdalen Gawyn, a maid servant taken in man's clothing, was pilloried having her hair - a powerful sign of femininity - hanging over her shoulders, but 'apparelyd in th'attyre wherewith she ys nowe clothyd'. Likewise Dorothy Clayton was pilloried in Cheapside for the space of two hours, 'apparyled in suche manner and sorte and in such kynde of mans apparell, as at the tyme of her apprehension did [wear]'. Afterwards, both were committed to Bridewell.[128]

But the offence, and punishments, of gender disguise were themselves gender specific. Firstly, it was far less common for a man to dress as a woman, than the other way round. It may be that there was little to gain for men to assume a role which offered them less freedom of action and public agency. In a patriarchal society the step from male to female could only be seen as a retrograde one, moving down rather than up the evolutionary ladder - or, in more contemporary terms, the great chain of being.[129] Secondly, when the very few cases of male transvestism did come to trial, they seem to have been treated more leniently than instances of female cross-dressing. David Cressy's article explores a case heard before an Oxfordshire church court in 1633. In it Thomas Salmon, a midwife's servant, admitted masquerading as a woman in order to participate in the gossips' merrymaking which followed a safe delivery. The 'church accepted Thomas Salmon's confession and assigned him a formal penance. The incident closed with punishments that were remarkably mild. The court had done its duty in disciplining youthful folly but found nothing gravely amiss by the laws of church or state'.[130] A similar attitude can be seen in a case that came before the Aldermen's Court almost eighty years earlier, in 1556. In it two men, Robert Chetwyn and Richard Myles had been committed to ward for being inappropriately clothed in a public place. Chetwyn had gone abroad the previous day 'in a womans apparell', and Myles had gone before him 'with a scarf on his necke'. Instead of being pilloried, whipped, or sent to Bridewell, Chetwyn and Myles were

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[127] Bridewell Court Minutes, 4: 270. Transcribed in ibid.

[128] Repertories, 18: 372; Repertories, 19: 93. Transcribed in ibid.

[129] This is the view favoured by Bullough in 'Tranvestites in the Middle Ages'.

[130] Cressy, *Gender Trouble*, p. 450.

merely 'pardonyd of theire folye' and discharged. In addition Chetwyn was ordered to find himself a master and thus, one assumes, enter a more sober and responsible life path.[131] Clearly, if these two instances are anything to go by, male cross-dressing was not transgressive in the same way as was female transvestism. Even this latter variety was an infringement of a relatively minor sort. Like sexual misdemeanours, female cross-dressing was a potential challenge to good morals and a well-ordered community, rather than signalling 'a sex-gender system under pressure'.[132] It was unseemly and offensive to the establishment (and perhaps intriguing and erotic, too), but it did not represent a serious threat. Even less so did male cross-dressing, which was read as a prank or jest; a possibly irritating, but ultimately pardonable, folly. Given this leniency towards male transvestism, an alternative explanation presents itself for the extreme scarcity of documented cases. It is just possible that, being unworthy of punishment, incidents never reached the courts at all.

However, even with the tolerance shown towards men, the official attitude displayed around the sartorial transgressions of the lower orders is a far cry from the tone employed with elite manipulations of disguise. We have only to recall Lady Fanshawe's proudly writing of borrowing the cabin boy's clothes, or Lady Halkett's description of the future James II in a gentlewoman's habit, to realise that there something very different was going on. For the middling and upper sort gender disguise - as with other maskings of identity - was culturally sanctioned in necessity. When personal safety was threatened, transvestism became a perfectly acceptable, and even praiseworthy, strategy. Sir John Reresby took the trouble to note an incident from the life of his uncle, Sir Tamworth Reresby, which showed such resource and initiative. Sir Tamworth was taken prisoner during the Civil War and sent to Ely House in London. 'He continued ther four months, till by favour of a woeman whos hous joined to the chamber wher he lay he broak a passage into her hous and escaped in woeman's apparell.'[133]

Two more famous escapes concern women. The first occurred in 1605 when Lady Elizabeth Southwell fled the country with her lover, Sir Robert Dudley. Leaving a previous wife and children, Dudley nevertheless took with him a page - the disguised Lady

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[131] Repertories 13: 426[v]. Transcribed in Shapiro, *Gender in Play*.

[132] Howard, 'Cross-Dressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle', p. 20.

[133] *Memoirs of John Reresby*, ed. by Andrew Browning (Glasgow, 1936), p. xxxix.

Elizabeth. They settled on the continent, received a papal dispensation to marry, and apparently found their somewhat uncertain history of bigamy and transvestism no impediment to social acceptance.[134] A less happy ending awaited Lady Arbella Stuart, who in 1611 also escaped the country to be with her husband, William Seymour. As James I's cousin and an heir to the English succession, Stuart's marriage was a matter for state management. However, having wed Seymour - another potential claimant for the throne - without James's consent, Lady Arbella and her husband were imprisoned. They both contrived to escape their separate confinements: Stuart by 'drawing a pair of great French-fashioned Hose over her Petticotes, putting on a Man's Doublet, a man-lyke Perruque with long Locks over her Hair, a blacke Hat, black Cloake, russet Bootes with red Tops, and a Rapier by her Syde'[135]; Seymour, apparelled in 'wig, beard and a carter's clothing'.[136] They were caught and returned, but although imprisoned, their disguised manner of escape went unrebuked.

This resort to the play of gender disguise *in extremis* was deeply ingrained in contemporary thought. A standard plot in innumerable plays, episodes of cross-dressing were also common in Renaissance prose romances, where 'a male protagonist for reasons of intrigue, love stratagem, or escape from danger puts on female clothes'.[137] These literary examples presumably grow out of classical and medieval antecedents, in which such tactics win the day for the side of the 'right'. Even polemical literature in rabid opposition to transvestite practices had at least to acknowledge, if only to counter, this broadly accepted strand of thought. John Rainoldes rather testily confessed that he supposed a man might put on woman's apparel, 'For saving of his life or countrie'.[138] The author of *Haec-Vir*, more grudgingly still, decided that: 'It is disputable amongst our Diuines, whether vpon any occasion a woman may put on mans attyre, or no: all conclude vnfit; and the most

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[134] Recounted in Orgel, *Impersonations*, pp. 113-14.

[135] Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I collected chiefly from the original papers of the Right Honourable Sir Ralph Winwood, Kt.* 3 vols (London, 1725) III, 279, quoted in G.P.V. Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant* (London, 1962), p. 121. Akrigg's source has also been quoted by Shapiro, *Gender in Play*, p. 15.

[136] *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, ed. by Sara Jayne Steen (Oxford, 1994), pp. 68-69.

[137] Winfried Schleiner, 'Male Cross-Dressing and Transvestism in Renaissance Romances', *Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 606-19 (p. 607).

[138] Rainoldes, *Th'overthrow of Stage Playes*, p. 14.

indifferent will allow it, but only to escape persecution'.[139] Even Prynne gave a conditional admission of transvestism's acceptability, but linked it to a renewed refutation. 'Firstly, admit it were lawful for a man to put on womāns apparell to saue his life, or to avoid some imminent danger [...] yet it followes not hence, that therefore it is lawfull for Men-actors to put on womens aray to act a Play'.[140] During Prynne's trial this very point was raised to illustrate the 'weaknes of his argumentes', for 'yf a man in his howse were beseidged by pagans would hee nott disguise himselfe in his maide's apparell to escape'.[141]

But despite the prevalence of this sanction it was, as we have seen, very selectively applied. Only to the wealthy and already privileged was given the approval to manipulate their appearance and disguise their status, role or gender. To ordinary folk such attempts were met with varying degrees of disapprobation or even, as in the case of the Godmans', brutal punishment. Helped by her husband John, Johan Godman 'disgised and appareled in all thinges like a souldier' went about the city as a lackey. No reason for this subterfuge is given, but perhaps Johan and John wished to be together in military service (an explanation favoured by Cressy[142]), or perhaps they saw in Johan's disguise as a servant a way of making extra cash. Regardless of their reasons, when found guilty both were set in the pillory, whipped naked to the waist, and then kept at Bridewell.[143]

To illustrate again how attitudes towards disguise in general, and gender disguise in particular, fractured along lines of rank, I wish finally to look at two comparable cases in which two women, one of them cross-dressed, married. The first incident is from 1682, and concerns a suit brought for annulment in the London Consistory Court.[144] Arabella Hunt, the plaintiff, claimed that on 12 September 1680 she had married one Amy Poulter, who was dressed as man and going under the name of James Howard. Arabella, a musician moving in Court circles, moreover asserted that Amy Poulter had been the wife of Arthur Poulter for eight years, and at the time of Arabella and Amy's wedding they had still been

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[139] *Haec-Vir*, sig. B4^{r}, in *Three Pamphlets*, ed. by Baines.

[140] Prynne, *Histriomastix*, p. 182.

[141] *Proceedings Against William Prynne*, ed. by Gardiner, p. 3.

[142] Cressy, *Gender Trouble*, p. 460.

[143] Repertories, 16, 522. Transcribed in Shapiro, *Gender in Play*.

[144] This case is discussed, and selected documents transcribed, by Crawford and Mendelson, 'Sexual Identities'.

married. Arabella's case seemed incontrovertible. Amy admitted her previous marriage to Arthur, a gentry son from Hertfordshire, and also that with his recent death she was in receipt of a jointure from the Poulter family of £300 per year. Lastly she was examined by a panel of midwives and declared to be 'a perfect woman in all her parts'. On 15 December 1682 the court gave its verdict. They annulled the marriage and 'pronounced Amy and Arabella free to marry again, so long as they chose suitable male partners.' Apart from ordering Amy, the perpetrator of the disguise, to pay the costs, there was no other punishment.

In contrast to this tale of socially privileged subjects is the story, also from the 1680s, of maidservant Mary and her friend Margaret, a carpenter's wife.[145] Mary had formed an relationship with sailor Charles Parsons, who at the time of recounting had gone to sea. Discovering herself to be pregnant Mary approached Charles's mother for assistance, leading the mother to believe that Charles and she were married. The mother, however, insisted on seeing a marriage certificate. At this Mary went to her friend Margaret, and together they resolved a plan. Margaret dressed in a suit of her husband's clothes and took the name of Charles Parsons. The two then persuaded the Clerk of the Parish to marry them and, for a suitable backhander, to pre-date the certificate appropriately. The marriage certificate successfully obtained all would have gone well, only Margaret and Mary could not forbear boasting of their triumph. At the end of a series of revelations, the Clerk made a complaint to the local magistrate, and the guilty pair are bound over to appear at the next Assizes. It may well be that this account is apocryphal. Although supplying places, dates and names, Crawford and Mendelson have found no record of any case that answers to it.[146] There is, however, no uncertainty about the different fate that awaited the two differently circumstanced pairs of women.

Just as with the disguise of identity in general, then, the disguise of gender was a tool more freely available to the elite. Ordinary folk might make use of if, but they risked - especially as women - censure or retribution. As Stephen Orgel has written, 'contexts are everything [...] The proprieties of gender have everything to do with the proprieties of

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[145] 'The She-Wedding: Or, a Mad Marriage between *Mary*, a Seaman's mistress, and *Margaret*, a Carpenter's wife, at *Deptford* (1684), in *Harleian Miscellany*, VI, 370-73. It is also mentioned in Crawford and Mendelson, 'Sexual Identities', pp. 368-69.

[146] Crawford and Mendelson, 'Sexual Identities', p. 376, n. 30.

social class'.[147] This attitude helps us locate Chamberlain's extraordinarily casual reaction to Henrietta Maria's appearance, with her ladies, in the Shrovetide Masque in 1626.

> On Shrovetuisday the Quene and her women had a maske or pastorall play at Somerset House, wherein herself acted a part, and some of the rest were disguised like men with beards. I have knowne the time when this wold have seemed a straunge sight, to see a Quene act in a play but *tempora mutantur et nos.*[148]

With a shrug, therefore, Chamberlain accepts the sight of the Queen on stage as odd, but a sign of the changing times. The vision of court ladies in false beards, however, seems to him to be not in the least peculiar or worrying. In an appropriately exclusive context, bearded women go unremarked.

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[147] Orgel, *Impersonations*, pp. 120-21.

[148] *Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, 630. The importance of costumes and cross-dressing in Shrovetide masques is discussed in Barbara Ravelhofer, 'Bureaucrats and Courtly Cross-Dressers in the *Shrovetide Masque* and *The Shepherd's Paradise*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), 75-96.

Conclusion

FROM RICHES TO RAGS

In 1641 William Calley wrote a letter describing a theft:

> on Saturday the 10th of this instant Aprill betweene twelve and one of the Clocke at night wee lost eight payres of new Canvas sheetes layd in the garden to bee whited but whether over burdened or out of running (like the Lapwing with cryeng to draw further from his nest) they dropped three payres in two severall places openly to bee seene as if they had gone that way which I cannot believe they did, neither doe I thinke they were straungers altogeather; we haue vsed the best diligence wee can by searching but found noething more then what before I sayd was left.[1]

In losing their canvas sheets, William's household were the victims of an extremely common form of crime. So frequently were textiles stolen, that rogue pamphlets even alleged a particular type of criminal specialized in pilfering cloth and clothing. It was said these 'hookers', 'anglers' or 'curbers' - named after their long poles fitted with iron hooks - would use this tool of trade to pluck items of apparel through windows and open doors, or from where garments lay drying in the sun.[2] Working from the less debatable evidence of court records, historians agree both on the reality of clothing theft, and its frequency.[3] When soldiers ransacked his daughter's house, Bulstrode Whitelocke wrote that by force they took goods, money and plate. They also took away the couple's 'wering apparell, & even to her childbed linnen'.[4] Similarly, on a trip to

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[1] PRO, SP16/479/78.

[2] Thomas Harman, *A Caveat or Warening for Commen Cursetors* (1567), in *Awdeley's Fraternitye of Vacabondes, Harman's Caveat etc*, ed. by Edward Viles and F.J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, extra ser., 9 (1869), pp. 21, 35-36.

[3] For example, in sampled evidence from Cheshire in the 1590s to the 1660s, Garthine Walker has demonstrated that clothing and household linens were the most popular goods stolen by both men and women, see 'Women, Theft and the World of Stolen Goods', in *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, ed. by J. Kermode and G. Walker (London, 1994), pp. 81-105 (esp. pp. 87-88).

[4] *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, ed. by Ruth Spalding, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 13 (London, 1990), p. 621.

Jersey sailors broke open the trunks belonging to Lady Fanshawe. They stole 'a quantity of gold lace, with our best clothes and linnen and all my combs, gloves, ribonds, which amounted to near three hundred pounds'.[5]

Clothing theft is now very rare. A promise to be 'tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime' hardly brings to mind the threat of stolen garments. The practice of taking apparel has diminished, as has the monetary worth of the garments themselves. For early modern clothing crime was a direct reflection of contemporary value. Not only was dress relatively more expensive than today, it had relatively more importance. For in a society in which there were fewer 'things' to own, clothing was more economically visible. For us these experiences, however, open a window on to a world of re-use. It is a world markedly different from our own, in which garments are worn and discarded. Unwanted, clothing is perhaps given to charity, but very rarely is it converted for another wearer, or to another function. Today we even buy our rags new - but call them dish cloths, paper towels and tissues, dusters, and disposable nappies. By contrast, the early modern experience was one that husbanded this valuable resource, tailoring it - figuratively and literally - to a number of needs.

We have seen that the capital garments represented could be realized by the simple expedient of theft. Sartorial investment could also be turned into ready cash by its sale. For example Pepys, on the rise in his professional life but still financially cautious, bought a second-hand velvet cloak. Interestingly, he spent two pounds more for it than had the seller, but Pepys still considered it 'worth my money'. Some years later when better off himself, he noted the 'sad condition' of a Mrs Williams who 'hath been fain of late to sell her best clothes and Jewells to get a little money upon'.[6] More commonly recorded by personal narratives was a visit to the pawn shop. In 1629 Sir

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[5] *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. by John Loftis (Oxford, 1979), p. 118.

[6] *Diary*, III, 84, 17 May 1662; VIII, 314, 1 July 1667. On the second-hand trade, including its links with the theft and pawning of garments, see the work by Beverly Lemire esp. 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes', *Journal of British Studies*, 27 (1998), 1-24.; 'Peddling Fashion: Salesmen, Pawnbrokers, Taylors, Thieves and the Second-hand Clothes Trade in England, c. 1700-1800', *Textile History*, 22 (1991), 67-82.; and *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke, 1997). On the second-hand market in early modern Italy, see Patricia Allerston, 'Reconstructing the Second-hand Clothes Trade in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Venice', *Costume*, 33 (1999), 46-56.

Francis Harris wrote a letter of appeal to his aunt, Lady Barrington. He hoped that 'some freind reedemes me a doblett and hose of black which lyeth for 21s'.[7] This method of converting worn assets to hard cash could be employed apparently regardless of income, social standing, or political and religious persuasion. The staunchly pious Alice Thornton pawned her husband's sword, and the staunchly royalist Duchess of Newcastle was told by her husband 'that I must of necessity pawn my cloaths to make so much Money as would procure a Dinner'.[8] For Henry Newcome, a poor parishioner with a shiftless husband who pawned her coat was a moral exemplar.[9] At the other end of the social scale Queen Henrietta Maria, with a husband in a different plight, pawned the crown jewels.[10] For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men and women, the pawnbrokers was a universal place of transformation, turning apparel from capital into cash, and then back again.[11]

Garments might be circulated through many other mechanisms. They were passed on to dependents, left as testamentary bequests, given to local churches for making into vestments, and re-used within the household.[12] Lady Clifford's diary illustrates some of these multiple uses. In November 1617 she gave to the Queen, by my Lady Ruthven, the gift of 'the skirts of a White Satin Gown all pearl and embroidered

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[7] *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632*, ed. by Arthur Searle, Camden 4th ser., 28 (London, 1983), p. 114.

[8] *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*, Surtees Society, 62 (1875), p. 163. *The Lives of William Cavendishe, Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. by Mark Antony Lower (London, 1872), p. 71.

[9] *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A.*, ed. by Richard Parkinson, 2 vols, Chetham Society, 26, 27 (1852), I, 85.

[10] For Lucy Hutchinson's reaction, see *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. by N.H. Keeble (London, 1995), pp. 81, 160.

[11] Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones consider the central role of pawned clothing to the Renaissance theatre, see *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 175-206. The importance of clothing to the pawnbroker's trade continued well after this period. For example, in the 1770s a York pawnbroker called George Fettes took up to two hundred pledges per week. John Styles has found that two-thirds of these pledges were garments, see 'Clothing the North: The Supply of Non-élite Clothing in the Eighteenth-Century North of England', *Textile History*, 25 (1994), 139-66, (p. 159).

[12] On clothing as testamentary bequest, see Jane E. Huggett, 'Rural Costume in Elizabethan Essex: A Study Based on the Evidence from Wills', *Costume*, 33 (1999), 74-88.

with colours'. Clearly these skirts were new and not second-hand, and cost Lady Anne 'fourscore pounds without the Satin'. Earlier that year however, in the February, she mentioned she had passed on her daughter's old clothes to her Steward, so that Legge could give them to his wife.[13] Also in 1617 Lady Anne noted her then husband's plans to refurbish their country house, Knole, in part re-using his own apparel for the furnishings. Along with the Earl of Dorset's orders to the Steward to dress up the rooms 'as fine as he could', he 'determined to make all his old clothes in purple stuff for the gallery & Drawing Chamber'.[14] Two years later Lady Anne noted that she gave away her sable muff to Sir Robert Taxley.[15] Perhaps most interestingly of all, despite being one of the wealthiest women in the country, that month Lady Anne also wrote that 'My Lord gave me 3 Shirts to make Clouts of'.[16]

So clothes in early modern England were an asset, costly to begin with, but if carefully managed imbued with the potential of bringing in more money. They were material items in which utility, investment and social possibility combined to create unique value. Re-circulating through theft, and also re-sale; pawning, bequest and gift; garments could pass through many different hands. At each stage of their ownership they were wrung of still more value, till finally there was nothing left to exploit. As illustrated by Lady Anne's re-use of her husband's shirts, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century story of clothes was literally a tale of riches to rags.

It is hardly surprising that something as materially significant as dress, should also be charged with values over and above its financial and utilitarian worth. In exploring the ways that clothing participated in the lives of the upper and middling sort, this thesis has sought to uncover some of this cultural significance. It cannot be appreciated, however, without first apprehending the importance of textiles to early

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[13] *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. by D.J.H. Clifford (Stroud, 1990), pp. 64, 49.

[14] Ibid., p. 55. While the Earl of Dorset's wardrobe inventory does include a purple suit, it does not record the re-use of its fabrics as furnishings. However, this same inventory does note that caparisons were re-made into such items as chairs, stools, cushions and canopies for Knole. It also provides evidence that the Earl gave some of his garments away to dependents, see Peter Mactaggart and Ann Mactaggart, 'The Rich Wearing Apparel of Richard, 3rd Earl of Dorset', *Costume*, 14 (1980), 41-55.

[15] *Diaries of Lady Clifford*, p. 81.

[16] Ibid.

modern society. A necessity, they figured in the most mundane of experiences. Yet as beautiful and luxurious commodities fabrics also participated in such heavily charged contexts as the celebration of authority, both earthly and divine. Contemporary consumers demonstrated a knowledge of textile properties, distinguishing cloth by its variety, attributes, and uses. This expertise extended to the 'making' of clothes. Although sewn by a tailor, the consumer had an active role, commonly first selecting and buying the right quantity and type of fabric, deciding on cut and style, and exercising choice over the finishing and trimming of a garment in order to achieve their desired appearance. Once made up, elite wearers demonstrated a prowess in the manipulation of their garments, styles to the 1620s in particular demanding that they negotiate their world through the medium of padded, stiffened and multi-layered forms. Clothing had many other implications for the body. From swaddling at birth to death's shroud, clothes were a positive presence that people felt managed, protected and sustained their physical progress through life. Outer garments were a decorative barrier against disease and cold. Inner linen garments resided somewhere between flesh and fabric. A publically glimpsed suggestion of intimacy, linen was skin-like and sexually evocative. Its white abundance also spoke of the luxury of wealth and the gentility of a disciplined physicality.

The social body, too, was profoundly affected by costume, as individuals used it to signal and perform aspects of personality. However, this was by no means always a consensual activity, as the imposed persona of the socially marginalized was frequently achieved through the medium of dress. The powerful nature of the appearential text emerges also through scrutiny of the acts and proclamation of apparel, measures which sought to control access to the dress styles of the elite. The transformation of appearances was policed less overtly through the attitude of authority towards disguise. For the privileged the manipulation of outward personae was an allowable, and sometimes praiseworthy, strategy. For the humble, it was deceitful, subversive and punishable. While tracing these stories of use through legal discourse, written public debate, and individual claims and reminiscences, I have tried to draw attention to the agency of dress. Certainly garments were put on and manipulated by their wearers, but they also to a certain extent exercised a reverse influence. Clothes

shaped the configurations of the body, affected the spaces and interactions between people, and altered the perceptions of the wearer and viewers. As William Shakespeare had Perdita say, 'sure this robe of mine does change my disposition'.[17]

There is, however, a coda to this riches to rags story which was so profoundly entwined in people's lives. It opens with Endymion Porter, who has so far made only a peripheral appearance. A Stuart courtier, Porter accompanied Charles in his disguised Spanish venture. He was also connected, through the favours of patronage, to the Calley household. In 1640 Porter and three others petitioned the king for a monopoly on the making of white writing paper. As fundamental to the success of the venture, they also requested a prohibition on the export of linen rags, instead desiring that the rags be sold to them.[18] For the making of paper was dependent on the tattered remains of textiles, and represents an after-life to the long cycle of cloth re-use. As John Taylor, the Water Poet, observed of these rags:

> And some of these poore things perhaps hath beene
> The linnen of some Countesse or some Queene,
> Yet lyes now on the dunghill, bare and poore
> Mix'd with the rags of some baud, theefe, or whore.
> And these things haue beene in better states
> Adorning bodies of great Potentates [...]
> May not the torne shirt of a Lords or Kings
> Be pasht and beaten in the Paper mill
> And made Pot-paper by the workemans skill?[19]

In order to approach the meanings of dress, this investigation began by considering the metaphor of textile as text. Bringing interpretive strategies to bear on the dressed figure,

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[17] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, IV, 4, 134.

[18] *CSPD* 1640, p. 226. Porter and his colleagues were not the first to request this. In 1585 a London stationer, Richard Tottyl, had petitioned for the right to make white paper, and for the prohibition of rag export. While Tottyl failed, in 1589 jeweller and papermaker John Spilman was granted the monopoly for rags. Although most paper used in England was imported, between 1601 and 1650 there were forty-one paper mills, see Richard L. Hills, *Papermaking in Britain 1488-1988* (London, 1988), pp. 50-52.

[19] John Taylor, 'The Praise of Hemp-Seed', in *All the Workes of John Taylor the Water Poet* (London, 1630; repr. 1977), III, 68-70 [irregular pagination].

this thesis asserted that viewers produced a range of complex and multiple readings. We end, however, by confronting the literal truth of the fabrication of meaning. Worn too thin and tattered to sustain further re-use, garments yet began a second life. Transformed from rags to writing paper, textiles again became text.

Glossary

The following glossary has been compiled with reference to:

M.C. Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Oxford, 1936)

C.W. Cunnington and P. Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1954)

C.W. Cunnington and P. Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1955)

Aileen Ribeiro and Valerie Cumming, *The Visual History of Costume* (London, 1989)

Karen Baclawski, *The Guide to Historic Costume* (London, 1995).

The main source for a particular definition has been indicated after the relevant entry.

bays / baize A napped woollen cloth. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

band (m, f) A separate linen or lace collar attached to the neck of a shirt or smock. Falling bands turned down, and standing bands were starched and worn upright with support underneath. (Baclawski)

base coat (m) Jerkin with the skirts made longer than normal. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

beaver (m) A style of hat.

bodice (f) The section of a woman's dress above the waist. (Baclawski)

broadcloth Fine woollen cloth of two yards width. (Linthicum)

buff coat (m) A tough protective coat made of ox hide. Primarily a military garment. (Baclawski)

busk (f) A removable wood or bone insert slipped into a casing at the front of the bodice which increased the corseting effect.

bum roll (f) A padded roll tied around the hips as alternative way of creating a French farthingale style.

calico A cotton or linen and cotton fabric made in various grades. (Linthicum)

cambric A fine linen fabric.

canions (m) Close fitting extensions to trunk hose ending at about the knee. Made in either matching or contrasting fabric to the hose. (Baclawski)

canons (m) Wide frills worn as decorative additions to stockings. Worn only with open or petticoat style breeches. (Cunnington, *Seventeenth*)

canvas A linen cloth frequently used for household purposes, doublets, and stronger cheaper shirts.

cassock (m) A short loose coat widening towards the hem. (Cunnington, *Seventeenth*)

caul (f) A net covering the hair made of gold thread, silk, or hair. Usually decorated with gold or pearls, and lined with fine textiles such as tissue. (Linthicum)

chamlet A soft light fabric woven with silk and a fine fleece, such as chamois. (Linthicum)

cloth A woollen textile. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

cloth of gold /silver Silken materials woven with metallic threads. These threads were also woven into lace.

codpiece (m) A padded decorative pouch attached to the hose and concealing the opening at centre front between the legs. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

coif (f) A small close fitting cap, usually made of linen. (Baclawski)

cordovan A Spanish leather. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

crespin / cippin (f) A fine linen caul. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

damask A rich silk of floral or geometric pattern. (Linthicum)

diaper A linen cloth used for household purposes. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

doublet (m) An outer garment for the upper body worn over a shirt. Doublets were long sleeved and close fitting, and by means of lacing also provided the means for keeping up the hose or breeches. (Baclawski)

ell A measure of length equalling forty-five inches.

farthingale (f) An frame of cane, bone or wood hoops supporting an overskirt worn over the top. The Spanish farthingale was conical in form, and the French farthingale made a wheel shape around the wearer's hips. Alternatively, the French farthingale style might also be achieved by wearing a bum roll. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

ferrandine A silk and wool fabric. (Cunnington, *Seventeenth*)

frieze A coarse woollen fabric. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

fustian A cotton or cotton mix fabric that had a silky appearance like velvet. (Linthicum)

garters (m, f) Bands of silk or ribbon that secured stockings. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

gown (m, f) For men a long, open, loose fitting outer garment worn over doublet and hose. Gowns had collars and sleeves, sometimes hanging. (Baclawski) For women a long outer garment worn over bodice and skirt, either with or without sleeves. If sleeved they could be long, short, puffed or hanging. Loose bodied gowns, as the name suggests, fell loosely from the shoulders. Close bodied gowns fitted to the waist, then flowed out over the skirt. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

grosgrain A taffeta weave with thick cords or 'gros grains' in the fabric. (Linthicum)

holland A fine linen made in various grades. The finest was used for garments such as shirts and handkerchiefs. (Linthicum)

hose (m) The covering for a man's body from waist to feet. Upper hose were synonymous with breeches. Nether hose, stocks, or stockings covered the lower portion of the legs. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

jerkin (m) An outer garment worn over the doublet, and very similar in appearance. Usually sleeveless.

kersey A lightweight woollen fabric. (Linthicum)

lawn A fine linen used for wrist and neck wear, and rails. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

mantle (m, f) An outer garment similar to a full length cloak. Worn in mourning. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

mantua (f) An open robe originating in the late seventeenth century worn with bodice and underskirt. The mantua had a distinctive arrangement of fabric folds and pleats at the back. (Ribeiro and Cumming, Baclawski)

mask (f) Either full or half masks were worn to cover the face and protect the complexion when outdoors. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

nightgown (m, f) A full length informal garment worn by both men and women. It was not bed attire.

oes Small metal rings or eyelets sewn decoratively to material. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

peascod belly (m) A style of doublet with extra padding added at the waist. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

perpetuana A woollen cloth possible named for its lasting quality. (Linthicum)

petticoat (f) A woman's skirt or underskirt, and not an undergarment as it is today.

petticoat breeches (m) A short-lived fashion of the 1660s, petticoat breeches had extremely wide legs pleated into the waistband, but not held at the knee. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

plush Silken fabric with a longer and softer pile than velvet. (Linthicum)

points (m, f) Metal-tagged ribbon or lace ties used for fastening garments together, but also as decorative embellishments. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

purl A narrow lace of silk and silver or gold. (Linthicaum)

rail (f) A large diaphanous shawl. When threaded with wire the rail stood to from an arch over the head. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

rebato (f) A linen or lace collar wired to stand up around the back of the neck and head. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

roses (m, f) Large rosettes of ribbon or lace decorating shoes. (Linthicum)

ruff (m, f) Originally the frill that edged the standing collar of a shirt or smock, by the 1570s it had become a separate garment of starched linen or lace. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

russet A coarse woollen cloth, usually the colour of the natural wool but also dyed into russet and other hues. (Linthicum)

safeguard (f) An overskirt worn for protection against soiling or extra warmth. (Cunnington, (*Sixteenth*)

sarcenet A fine, thin and soft silken fabric. (Linthicum)

satin Glossy silken material. (Linthicum)

shadow (f) A length of fine linen or lace worn as a an accessory to a hood. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

shag A thick-piled woollen fabric often used as a warm lining. (Linthicum)

shammy Chamois leather. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

shirt (m) Undergarment made usually of linen, long to the wrist and falling well below the trunk.

slop (m, f) A loose tunic like garment worn in mourning. (Linthicum)

slops (m) A general term for wide baggy breeches. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

smock (f) Undergarment made usually of linen, long to the wrist and falling well down the legs. Also called a shift.

spangs / spangles Small thin pieces of metal like sequins sewn decoratively to material (Ribeiro and Cumming)

stomacher (m, f) A stiffened triangular-shaped fabric insert worn point downwards usually to close a gap at centre front of a woman's bodice, and fastened in place by ties, pins or lacing. Occasionally a section of material covering a doublet or gown opening worn by men. (Baclawski, Ribeiro and Cumming)

taffeta Thin fine silken fabric with changeable colour effects. 'Tuft-taffeta' had sections woven with a raised pile which were a different colour again from the background cloth. (Linthicum)

tawny Both a woollen cloth, and a yellowish-brown colour.

thrummed hats Made of wool or silk woven to give a shaggy pile to the fabric's surface. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

tiffany A thin gauze-like fabric of soft silk and linen. (Linthicum)

tippet (m, f) A narrow pendant strip attached to the hood. Worn in mourning. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

tissue A variety of cloth of gold. (Cunnington, *Sixteenth*)

trunk hose (m) A style of breeches padded to swell out from the waist. In length they reached usually only to mid- or upper thigh. (Baclawski)

trunk sleeves (m, f) Very large sleeves puffed out at the upper part, and narrowing to a closed wrist. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

velvet Closely woven silk fabric with a short pile. (Linthicum)

venetians (m) Full baggy breeches closed at the knee. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

waistcoat (f) An informal sleeveless jacket. (Ribeiro and Cumming)

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